

# *The Great and Good*

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
RATIONAL RELIGION



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THE GREAT AND GOOD





SPRIT



LOVE



INTUITION



REASON

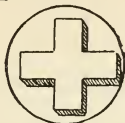


CONSCIENCE



WILL

DEITY

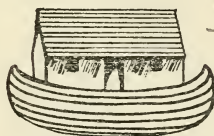


HUMANITY



NATURE

THE  
**GREAT  
& GOOD**  
*an Introduction to*  
**RATIONAL RELIGION**



IDEALISM



PROGRESS

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Brooke House: 22 23 & 39 Warwick Lane EC.,

109904  
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## PREFACE

BOOKS on Religion fall under three heads: First, the great mass of "orthodox" literature; next, the semi-orthodox; and lastly, that which is rational or openly "heretical." The semi-orthodox writers are marked by caution, reticence, and something bordering on insincerity. They are adepts at pouring new wine into old bottles. They know exactly that spice of heresy which the public will tolerate, and are careful not to exceed it by the fraction of a grain. The rational or openly heretical books are mostly agnostic, atheistic, materialistic, or negative. In fact some people seem to regard the word rational as equivalent to atheistic. Not many books on Religion are at once frankly rational, and at the same time uncompromisingly idealist.

Who will ascend the watch-tower of Idealism and tell us in plain language what he sees? If this task required any higher qualification than absolute sincerity, assuredly the present writer would not have undertaken it. The object, then, of this book is to state the religious opinions of the Great and Good men of past and present times, and to trace these opinions to Idealism as the central principle in which they meet and harmonise. Wherever possible I have given not my own words but those of some distinguished writer.

I have been guided by the conviction that Religion

must be approached by each individual, as it was by the human race, through poetry and mythology, not by way of logic and metaphysics. The highest truths are to be learnt not from the philosopher or the theologian, but from the poet, who (as Horace says) tells us more clearly than Chrysippus and Crantor what is worthiest and best.

I do not wish to pose as an *esprit fort*. I would not substitute for Religion either an intellectual system or a code of morality. I avoid all learned disquisitions: I raise no philosophic reek (as Burns would say), but regarding Religion as an intensely practical thing, I seek to interpret the wisdom of the ancients, and to point out the path to those who have less leisure for the search. Men of learning and leisure do not require a book of this sort, nor is it intended for them, as they have access to the authorities on which it is based.

But there are thousands of persons who have outgrown the popular superstitions, and who may be described, in the words of a well-known authoress (Mrs H. Ward), as unable either to accept fairy-tales or to resign themselves to a life without faith. Speaking for this class, Stopford Brooke says: "We yield to none in our belief in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but we insist upon the universal application of these doctrines; and we repudiate every one of the limitations which priesthoods and aristocracies [plutocracies] have imposed and incrustated upon these teachings for the sake of retaining power over the bodies and the souls of men." To such persons I dedicate this book, wishing to make it clear to them that "On peut admettre l'existence de Dieu, l'immortalité de

l'âme et la nécessité de la Religion dans la vie individuelle et sociale sans abdiquer la raison et sans cesser d'être libre-penseur" (Krause et Tiberghien).

I write as a disciple of Epictetus, and therefore a theist in no vague and uncertain acceptation of the term. But I agree with those who think that as Morality is preliminary to Religion, so Religion itself comes earlier than any theistic or other Philosophy, and is independent of it. In other words, belief in God is not the first but the last and highest stage in the development of the soul: a stage which can be reached only through practical Religion. Morality and Religion can and do exist apart from Theism, for the lower stages are naturally independent of the higher; but the reverse is not the case. Theism has no meaning apart from Religion and Morality. For the vitally important connection between an idealistic religion and a theistic philosophy (a point which cannot be argued at length) the reader is referred to the heading of chapter xxix. Since the Stoic system, the brightest beacon of antiquity, was extinguished, being involved in the discredit of Hellenism, mankind has wandered without guidance. Three causes led to the downfall of Hellenism: First, the intellect ran riot, assumed a supremacy over all other faculties, and set itself the absurd task of explaining the mystery of life. Secondly, Reason became associated in Aristotle with materialism, in Plato with vice. Thirdly, the coarse and brutal northern races which broke down the Roman power were (and still are to a great extent) incapable of abstract thought. Thus a fatal reaction set in, and Religion was divorced from Reason. The wild

speculations of Greek Philosophy were replaced by the irrational and puerile stultifications of "orthodox" theology.

The view of life here set forth obviously involves ultimate developments political and social which space does not permit me to discuss. It is for us to be faithful to Truth, whatever the results may be. The reader will find in these pages no original speculations, *nothing new*; only the ancient, simple, fundamental truths, ever obscured by time and ever revealed afresh to all who are not blinded by self-interest. Indeed, I should hesitate to publish this manuscript if it contained anything of my own, anything that has not the support and sanction of the Great and Good. I am no manufacturer, only a humble retailer who hands down goods from the shelf. But these goods are from such well-known firms as Socrates, Epictetus & Co.; Messrs Ruskin and Carlyle; Mazzini and Victor Hugo, Ltd.

Many years of labour and study have been devoted to the preparation of this book: nevertheless I am painfully aware that it is in some respects unworthy of the subject. In spite of its defects, the earlier edition was welcomed by some prominent Theists. Thus, Professor F. H. Newman wrote to the author: "I rejoiced to receive your book." Mrs Lynn Linton's approval was not less cordial and complete. If the present enlarged edition should find favour with even a few such friends of Truth, it is well. If not, it is also well. He who writes about Religion must remember that the nearer he comes to Truth, the more certain is he to offend the interested and the ignorant, the



deceivers and the deceived. In matters pertaining to Religion the approval of the world is evidence of falsehood: and success is eternal loss.

One important advantage may be claimed for this book, viz. that the author is not a theologian. A work on Religion by a theologian has much the same value as one on the drink question by a brewer or on Vegetarianism by a butcher. The theologian (priest, parson, or minister) must recommend his wares; he must postulate a view of life which is incompatible with Rational Religion.

The plan of the book is as follows:—Religion is dissociated from Morality on the one hand, and from Theology (Philosophy) on the other. It is identified with Idealism (chapters i.-vi.). It is next shown that Christianity (not, of course, that of the Churches) and Hellenism teach Religion in the most rational and effective way, viz. through the example of the Great and Good and the imitation of ideal characters (chapters vii., viii., and ix.). The teaching of Christianity and of Hellenism is considered in the light of Idealism, and the essential elements are separated from that which is transient and corrupt (chapters x. to xxii.). The need of Reform is shown (chapters xxiii. and xxiv.). Various reformed systems are examined and estimated according to the amount of Idealism which they contain (chapters xxv. to xxviii.). Finally, a Theistic Philosophy is briefly sketched, which, though not essential to Religion, is complementary to it and is in harmony with Idealism (chapters xxix. *seq.*).

The French Republican Calendar of 1793 is given in an appendix. From its intimate association with

Nature, this Calendar, though very imperfect, like all first attempts, will always interest progressive people: and it may perhaps serve the Idealist as an alternative way of marking the day of the year. It reminds us through the changing seasons of that simple agricultural life on which health of mind and body depends, and from which all true wealth is derived: that simple life to depart from which involves disease and in the end brings death. And perhaps it might be well if religious reformers, even at the risk of being called cranks, would use (together with the ordinary date, of course) the year of the death of Socrates. This would serve as a protest against the exclusive identification of religion with Christianity, and a reminder that not in Palestine only were there Prophets and Reformers, Great men and Good. The Positivist is not ashamed to use a double date.

Inasmuch as the terms Religion and Morality have no fixed connotation, I have given to them that meaning which appears to be most reasonable. Unless one wished to invent new terms, it is not possible to do otherwise: for to use the word Religion in the usual irrational acceptation would be to admit what I repudiate and to deny what I most desire to affirm. I believe that my use of the word Religion differs little from that of Kant.

I have thought it right to speak plainly about dangerous delusions. To individuals we must extend that charity which we hope to meet with ourselves; but institutions must in the interest of Truth be truthfully described. That kind of charity which shields abuses is in most cases a mere cloak for self-interest.

If I use the word Superstition, it is without ill-will or odium.

One or two passages may be thought too plain-spoken by those who do not realise the dangers that beset the old-fashioned blindfold piety. The conditions of modern life demand that the Eden-innocence (*simplex nobilitas*) of earlier days be replaced by a purity not less genuine, but more robust and practical.

Of Tolstoy's writings I have made little use, because this book was finished before they came into my hands. Moreover, the Russian prophet cannot be followed through thick and thin. The intense earnestness of this noble soul sometimes causes him to overstep the mark and to lose contact with Nature. His definition of Religion is too abstract and unpractical, and his subtle reasonings about the future life almost amount to a denial of the hope of immortality. Tolstoy errs also in ignoring Hellenism, and in supposing that Christianity began with Christ.

I have just lately seen the first volume only of a valuable theistic book entitled "Rational Christianity," by Hugh Junor Browne of Melbourne, 1879. Hon. Rollo Russell's beautiful essay on "Religion and Life" bears faithful witness to Truth. From the point of view of Philosophy this book may be described as semi-theistic. I have obtained, but not yet read, Washington Sullivan's "Morality as a Religion."

To Dr Alfred Russel Wallace, the distinguished scientist and much revered humanitarian, and to Mr V. Tchertkoff, the spiritual and idealistic Russian exile, I am indebted for advice and encouragement.

The publication of this book is due to the generosity

of a friend of enlightened opinions and emancipated mind, whose name I regret that I may not mention. He is far from endorsing all the views expressed in these pages: indeed he doubts whether it is a wise thing to unsettle men's faith. I will go a step further and admit that to unsettle a man's faith is a greater crime than to cut his throat. But at the same time I affirm that the greatest benefit which one mortal can confer upon his fellow is to unsettle his superstitions: for this is to drag him from a quagmire, to make faith possible to him, to bring the higher life within his reach. Faith and superstition can in no wise co-exist. Socrates and Christ were great unsettlers: so were the earlier Quakers; and there is, thank God, in such modern writers as Carlyle, Ruskin, Mazzini, and Victor Hugo a great deal of unsettlement.

If I withhold my name it is not in order to avoid obloquy, but from a very different motive. A writer who pledges himself as a matter of principle to derive no profit from the sale of his book may fairly claim the privilege of remaining anonymous; nevertheless, if my name could possibly add any weight to my words, I would certainly sign it.

The comments or suggestions of Idealists will be welcomed by the author, and if addressed to the publisher, will be forwarded. Allen Gleichgesinnten Gruss und Handschlag! To all like-minded friendly greeting!

*August 1904 A.D.*

*(Fructidor, Anno Socratis 2303.)*

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“Allen gehört was du denkst :

Dein eigen ist nur was du fühllest.”—SCHILLER.

“Haec non pro me loquor, ego enim in alto omnium vitiorum sum, sed pro illo cui aliquid acti est.”—SENECA.

“Noli quaerere quis haec scripserit, ne te auctoritas scribentis offendat : sed amor purae veritatis te ad legendum trahat.”

—IMITATIO.

“Io feci per far bene tutto quanto potevo. Se invece feci male, pensi il lettore che anche a far male costa fatica, e s'incontra difficoltà.”



# THE GREAT AND GOOD



## CHAPTER I

### RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

“Cast aside your mud idols [superstitions] and fix your eyes upon the Truth.”—EPICTETUS.

“Beware lest in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity [religion], and of the theology [philosophy] that is true.”—THOMAS PAINE, “Age of Reason.”

“None are worthy of the name of men but those who walk by the dictates of eternal Reason, and who love and follow the guiding ray [the Inner Light] that is vouchsafed from above to every man.”—ARCHBISHOP FÉNELON.

THE word Religion has no fixed meaning: each sect and denomination will give you a different answer if you ask in what Religion consists. In Romanist countries a man is called religious who shuts himself up in a monastery and leads a life of idleness. Protestants associate Religion with a series of complicated and irrational dogmas. Many persons who have not thought much about

Religion go through life with a vague idea that it has something to do with churches and services and prayers. But there exists a large and increasing number of sober, thoughtful, and educated men in this country and elsewhere who think quite otherwise about the nature of Religion, and who disconnect it absolutely from churches and services and prayers. How, then, are we to come at the truth?

Suppose that you had to explain the nature of bread to a native of northern Siberia, you would be compelled to clear the ground first by explaining to him that bread does *not* consist of birch-bark. Similarly, if you wish to find out what Religion really is, you must examine each of those ingredients which are supposed to constitute Religion, and you must make certain whether it is essential or an adulteration.

Let us first examine Theology and enquire whether it is or is not an essential element in Religion. Now, however we may define Religion, whatever may be our conception of it, we shall probably all agree that it must be something simple, practical, vital, having a direct bearing upon conduct. Matthew Arnold said that conduct is three-fourths of life: he might have gone farther and stated that conduct is the whole of life.

First, theology cannot be identified with Religion because it is not simple, but extremely complicated: so much so that no agreement

whatever exists upon theological questions. "The Religion of theology is still a mystery, even to the most learned, but the religion of duty is plain, even to a child" (Sir John Lubbock). Truth is ever plain, and subtlety is near akin to falsehood.

Next, theology is excluded because it is not practical, and has no direct bearing on life and conduct. We see men of the highest character holding the most grotesque and ludicrous theological opinions. And conversely we very frequently see men of the vilest character who are bigoted adherents of those theological ideas which happen at the moment to be in vogue. Clodd in his "Story of Creation" has something to this effect. When it shall be seen that theology has nothing whatever to do with man's duty to his fellows, then theology and Religion will no longer be united.

In the third place, theology is a source of discord, dividing good men into hostile camps. Religion, on the other hand, unites: *religat religio*. This, in fact, is probably the original meaning of the word. We read that in Greece the earliest unions were religious. So must all unions be at all times and in all places. For whatever our definition of Religion, we must see in it, as did the Hellenes of old, the only power which can mitigate the merciless severity of human competition.

Again, Religion must be something which

elevates the character; whereas theology is almost invariably associated with dishonesty and cruelty. This fact stares us in the face from every page of history.

Once more, the identification of Religion with theology leads to endless misapprehension, and brings Religion into contempt. A valuable book by Draper has the following title, "The Conflict between Religion and Science." This is quite misleading. The author clearly intends to speak of "The Conflict between Theology and Science." There is, and must be, a conflict between Science and the anthropomorphic theology of the Churches, but there cannot possibly be any conflict between Science and Religion. For Science is concerned with the accumulation and classification of facts, while Religion, however we define it, has to do with life and conduct. Science depends entirely on the intellect, Religion largely on the heart and will.

When I condemn theology, it must be understood that I refer to those who make a trade of it. Personally, I hold with the divine philosopher Marcus Aurelius, that without faith in the Deity life would not be bearable. But this is not Religion: it is philosophy. And my present purpose is to disentangle Religion from those elements which have been confused with it. I wish to show that theology or philosophy, true or false, rational or irrational, is not essential to Religion.

Can we suppose that in order to be religious a man must be versed in the mysteries of metaphysics, philosophy, theology? There is no philosophy in the religion of Christ, who was profoundly ignorant of all these things. Epictetus explains that only the practical part of the Stoic system, that is to say, the part which constitutes Religion, is essential and vital. Philosophy and cosmogony (theory of the world's origin) are affected by each addition to our knowledge of Natural Science, and change from one generation to another; but Religion cannot change, for human nature does not vary. The apparent variations in Religion are either corruptions or imperfect views. It is obvious that a thing which is invariable cannot depend upon a thing which alters.

There are some who pretend that theology is connected with Religion in this way, that it lends support and sanction, and supplies a motive for righteousness. In order to refute this ancient fallacy we will invoke the authority of the ancients. A familiar Latin verse runs thus :

“The righteous man does right from love of right.”

[“*Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore.*”]—

not from hope of reward or fear of punishment, still less from this or that theology. Another Latin author says: “He is a good man who obeys the law” [“*Vir bonus est quis? Qui leges*

juraque servat"]. Obedience it is, and not theology, which has to do with "Religion," obedience to the higher laws of our being.

Religion, I repeat, however we may define it, must be simple, practical, vital. Philosophy, on the contrary, is speculative and abstruse, for its province is to ascertain man's true relation to his surroundings, his position in the universe. Religion may perhaps be compared with navigation, theology or philosophy with astronomy. A sea-captain has crossed the Atlantic scores of times: he has never lost a ship, never made a mistake. Have we any right to examine this man about the nebular hypothesis? or to call in question his seamanship because his theory of the sun's photosphere is different from ours? Might not the seaman answer: "Astronomy is one thing, and navigation is another. It does not concern you whether I take observations on the Great Bear or the Southern Cross: the course which I steer is true, and I reach the other side in safety."

Naturally this view of Religion does not commend itself to priests, parsons, and ministers. These men live as parasites upon society; and if rational ideas should prevail, their occupation would be gone. But the fact remains, whether the priest approves or not, that we are not saved or damned for our opinions or for our theology.

You may worship a fetish or some hideous

insect, as does the Hottentot; this will not make you either religious or irreligious. Many primitive races were essentially religious, in spite of their fetish-worship and their defective morality, until they became degraded by contact with missionaries. You may worship Christ or Buddha or some other fellow-mortal; this again has nothing to do with Religion. It is the result of your want of education and enlightenment. I say "education," not "learning": a learned man may be, and often is, quite uneducated.

Once more, you may be religious and yet attend no public prayers, <sup>for</sup> you may have sufficient intelligence to perceive that public prayers and services are nothing more than the means by which priests and ministers get their living. And you may believe with Socrates that the Creator and Sustainer of this wonderful universe will do exactly what is best for all His creatures without being importuned by them. The Chinaman burns a bit of gilt paper in front of his joss, and the English Churchman lights a candle on his altar. But God can see your superstition and your hypocrisy without the help of that candle! And if you have any true religion, He can see that too. Finally, you may read the Testament or the Koran, or you may drink in the words of Epictetus the master. All this concerns no one but yourself. If any of these things help you, well and good, if not, let them alone.

Bishop Thirlwall has said that Religion without reason is superstition. Now, a man who has the true "apostolical succession" must know all about superstition; and indeed there is no fault to find with this episcopal definition. But I for my part would prefer to word it thus: Religion, when adulterated with theology, becomes a superstition. And under theology I would include the whole apparatus of saviours, mediators, prophecies, miracles, Bibles, and churches. Be well assured that all religion which requires the intervention of priest or minister is *ipso facto* false and spurious. Beware of those who place themselves between you and God (Lammenais).

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGION AND MORALITY

"La foi naïve est morte, il faut la remplacer par une foi réfléchie."—VICTOR COUSIN.

"The touchstone is that Religion of Nature and Reason which God has written in the heart."—DEAN PRIDEAUX.

THAT Religion is independent of theology is no abstract theory, but a matter of observation and experience. Non-theological Religions are professed by millions of our fellow-mortals. Foremost among these are Buddhism and Confucianism. Both of these are in some respects superior to Christianity. To come



nearer home: is there any one narrow and bigoted enough to deny that the system of Auguste Comte is, what it professes to be, a Religion? Yet the Positivists, like the Buddhists and the Confucians, are atheistic.

Let me explain once more that I have no sympathy with atheism, or with materialism of any sort, least of all with that lowest kind of materialism which goes by the name of orthodoxy. My aim is to clear the way for a definition of Religion by disentangling it from theology and philosophy.

The ethical societies contain a number of educated and enlightened men and women who are none the less religious because they repudiate all theology. Again, the agnostic view of life is not necessarily incompatible with Religion. Huxley, the inventor of the term "Agnostic," was estimable in public and in private life, and was honest enough to express openly the contempt which all scientific men feel for the popular superstitions.

A section of English Socialism, small in numbers, but intellectually and morally of supreme importance, must be reckoned as essentially religious. Dr Alfred Russell Wallace, the distinguished scientist, may represent this group: a man worthy to rank with the greatest and best of this generation and entirely free from the blight of theology.

The republican propaganda of Mazzini was

essentially religious. "The name of God (he says) must be inscribed upon our banner." He was in fact a theist. Nevertheless I do not hesitate to claim him as an opponent of theology, for he openly repudiated Romanism, and he had of course nothing in common with any of the Protestant sects. Mazzini has been truly called "a god-sent prophet."<sup>1</sup>

On similar grounds we can claim Tolstoy, the Russian seer, and his numerous disciples as non-theological. His idealistic theism is quite incompatible with the theology of any existing sect. In a word Tolstoy, like Mazzini, has no theology in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

Among the more enlightened Jews there are many whose grand and simple monotheism is quite in harmony with the view of Religion which I am advocating. And it is whispered that some of the Quakers are too broad-shouldered to fit into the narrow compartments of the popular theology.

I have now shown that millions of highly civilised men belong to non-theological systems. And I have mentioned a few instances from the great host of enlightened people throughout Europe and America who repudiate theology, although they may be essentially religious. To a candid and disinterested mind the conclusion is inevitable that Religion is unconnected with theology. But the theologian is notoriously

<sup>1</sup> J. A. R. Marriott, "Makers of Modern Italy."

wanting in candour, and on the question at issue he cannot, of course, claim to be disinterested. He will never admit the conclusion that we could be better without theology, for it would abolish his livelihood. His pocket is affected: his very existence is at stake. As he cannot make himself ridiculous by rejecting the premisses, he will, *more suo*, take refuge in some sophistry. For instance, he will admit that the men enumerated above may have virtues, but he will seek to deny that they can be religious. In plain English, the priest denies that any man is religious who does not pronounce his shibboleths.

A still more preposterous subterfuge is the distinction between "natural" and "revealed" Religion. Enlightened persons, and those generally whom the priest objects to, are permitted to have natural Religion, but the revealed commodity is reserved for his own particular dupes. Now, this subterfuge is as transparent as the other. It simply amounts to this: an irrational definition of Religion is proposed, and thus rational religionists are excluded.

It is hardly necessary to explain that if a Religion be not natural and rational, it must be unnatural and irrational. The natural and rational variety is ours, the theologian is welcome to the other. "Natural religion has not the imperfections of the established cults; it is idealised religion, without fault or flaw,

agreeable in all respects to reason" (Krause and Tiberghien). "All revealed or national religions are perversions of the Religion of nature" (Diderot).

Before answering in an affirmative and constructive manner the question "What is Religion?" there remains another misapprehension to be cleared away. I allude to the confusion between morality and Religion. Morality deals with the control of appetite; Religion, however we may define it, is concerned with man's relation to his fellows. The aim of morality is the health and efficiency of the individual: that of Religion is the welfare of Humanity. As private persons we are moral or immoral: as members of the community we are religious or irreligious.

Between morality and Religion there is this broad, practical distinction, that immorality generally brings an immediate retribution in this life; irreligion does nothing of the sort. In morality karma works rapidly: the simplest can see the working of the law. But in religion "the mills of God grind slowly"; the process is not manifest to the unregenerate mind. In plain words, morality "pays," Religion does not. An immoral man is a fool who in nine cases out of ten suffers for his folly. An irreligious man, on the contrary, a "man of the world," as we commonly call him, is, from a worldly point of view, extremely wise. Of course the worldling does not scoff at Religion. He is not so clumsy

as to make this mistake. He attaches himself to one of the popular superstitions, supports it liberally, and receives "excellent value" in return.

The instinct of self-preservation is in favour of morality, but against true Religion. By degrading the hope of a future life into a dogma, and by the vile expedient of making future rewards and punishments a motive for right conduct, the materialist has sought to reconcile Religion with self-interest. But Religion, thus reduced to a matter of profit and loss, has no more power for good. The contamination of materialism has destroyed it. Religion must be disinterested, and morality does not coincide with Religion.<sup>1</sup> It is the commonest thing in the world for a moral man to have no religion whatever. A hard, selfish, unscrupulous man is almost always a pattern of morality, because he is aware that it "pays" to avoid the coarser vices. Thus the philosopher Aristippus was perfectly moral, for he knew how to restrain his passions within the limits of prudence, and to prevent pleasure or anger from interfering with success in life. But he was at the same time absolutely irreligious, for he permitted no higher motives to interfere with the accomplishment of his aims. He had perfect self-control, but he laughed at self-denial.

Let us be quite clear about this point. People may be moral, abstemious, even ascetic in their

<sup>1</sup> See F. P. Cobbe, "Intuitive Morals," chap. iv.

mode of life, and yet soulless, godless, and utterly devoid of Religion. The temperance man gives up alcohol, sticks a bit of ribbon in his button-hole, and imagines that he is a saint. The fact is that a man may cease to make a beast of himself, and yet be as far from Religion as the north pole is from the south.

The following passage from Krause and Tiberghien will make clear the distinction between morality and asceticism :

“The instinctive tendencies of the mind and of the body are good and legitimate in themselves, but they must be restrained within certain seasons and certain limits. Despise and repress none of your mental and physical powers, but rule them with discernment, let not one encroach upon the other, but bring them into harmony.”

Morality may be summed up in the Stoic formula “sustine et abstine” [“patient endurance and abstinence”].<sup>1</sup>

“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control :  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.”

Opinions differ little on this subject. In all ages of the world and in all countries self-control, sobriety, moderation are things about which there is little dispute.

Morality has the “promise of the life that now is” (1 Tim. iv. 8), and it needs no other promise, and no higher sanction. Religion it is

<sup>1</sup> See Socrates in “Xenophon,” Mem. iv. 5.

which has the promise of the life which is to come. This explains why in the Hebrew scriptures there is no mention of a future state. The Mosaic system contains little that can be called Religion: it barely rises above morality, and for this reason it does not need to look beyond this life.

To sum the matter up: neither theology nor morality is essential to Religion. Thus the two things which form the main stock-in-trade of priest, parson, and minister are manifest adulterations.

### CHAPTER III

#### RELIGION DEFINED

"The effect of all true culture is to imbue the mind with Idealism."—EMERSON.

"In all Religion that deserves the name we have to do with Ideals."—Prof. J. H. BRIDGES.

UP to this point I have dealt negatively with Religion, attempting to show in what it does *not* consist. It will now be easier to treat the matter affirmatively and constructively, and to state what *is* the essential nature of Religion.

In order to arrive at a definition I will start from the fundamental proposition that Religion is concerned with right and wrong, with truth, beauty, justice, mercy, honesty, purity, and such-like things. From those who refuse to accept

this fundamental proposition we part company at once. Cicero, for instance, makes Religion to consist in knowing what ceremonies to perform. It is obvious that this definition is incompatible with the fundamental proposition just laid down. The same may be said of Dr Martineau's, and of other definitions which we need not stay to examine.

The practical conception of Religion which I take as a start-point is identical with that of the New Testament: "Whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, beautiful," etc., "these do, and the peace of God shall be with you" (Phil. iv. 8, 9). James (i. 27) defines Religion as philanthropy and purity: philanthropy representing of course the public, and purity the private part of Religion.

Now these things, truth, beauty, justice, purity, etc., are ideals, so in the Biblical language "unseen things," or "spiritual things." And these ideals, though in one sense they are private to each man, cannot by their very nature be confined to private life. Ideals pre-suppose that man is a social animal, a member of a family, of a race, of humanity. Justice could not exist if there were no one towards whom we might act unjustly: truth implies neighbours, fellow-mortals who might be deceived by falsehood. And so with most of the other ideals, they pre-suppose both public and private life.

Thus we arrive at the following definition:—



*Religion is the attempt to realise Idealism in public and in private life.* Just as we are unable to eat pure carbon, although our food consists in great measure of carbon; so idealism, being beyond us, must be brought within our reach. We are compelled to illustrate and enforce it by the example of heroic characters by precept, parable, and symbolism. But Religion is essentially Idealism, and none of these outward things must be confounded with it. They are but pictures, as it were, which may be useful in attracting the attention and fixing the thoughts on the reality which lies behind them.

“Idealism (says Canon Cheyne) alone has power to redeem mankind. The denial of Idealism is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. A man who has no ideals is hopeless.”<sup>1</sup>

“Every religious propaganda has two aims, to build up an ideal in the mind and to enkindle enthusiasm for that ideal in the heart” (“Ethics”).

Matthew Arnold regards Religion as “morality touched by emotion.” This higher morality is near akin to idealism. Bernardin de St Pierre defines Religion as “Pressure put upon ourselves for the good of others in the hope of pleasing God.” This, again, clashes in no way with idealism. And thus Comte (one word being altered), “A religious man is one who puts social affections above his personal instincts, consciously choosing good before evil.” This differs from St Pierre’s

<sup>1</sup> Sermon preached in Rochester Cathedral, October 1901.

definition just quoted only in the omission of the theistic sanction. In fact Comte's definition appears to be merely an echo of the earlier one. Both are valid, *as far as they go*; but they both err in ignoring all ideals excepting that of fraternity.

Now the idealist—that is to say, the man who compares himself and the institutions under which he lives with some pattern of perfection, some ideal—this man cannot fail to become aware of serious shortcomings and defects both in himself and his surroundings. Against these defects he is bound to struggle. Thus, we arrive at a practical test of Religion which may be expressed in these words: A religious man is one who fights against evil, within and without. Or if you like, you may put it thus: A religious man seeks to improve his own character and his surroundings. Or thus: Religion is the cultivation of public and of private ideals.

Do this in all sincerity, and be well assured that you have redemption and regeneration, and justification and sanctification, yes, and everlasting salvation, and all the other things which priests, parsons, and ministers have exclusively reserved for their dupes.

It will be self-evident that this definition involves the repudiation of almost everything that now passes under the name of Religion. And persons who imagine themselves to be religious will doubtless be shocked to learn that they

are destitute of the very rudiments of Religion. But in Hans Andersen's story of the little child who told the king that he was stark naked ; who was shocking, the baby who blurted out the truth, or the king who pretended to have clothes on when he was nude ?

The truth about the farce which now goes by the name of Religion must come out sooner or later. In the fulness of time some man of genius will arise and will fling down the gauntlet in the sight of the world. All the great host of those who have a vested interest in the established superstitions will fly to arms : a few ragged wretches will join the reformer, and Armageddon will begin.

It stands to reason that no man can ever succeed in perfecting his own character : and the reform of human institutions is a task beyond the powers of the best and wisest. Nevertheless in the effort to attain this double reform lies the true essence of Religion.

Religion has sometimes been regarded as a state of harmony. It is the reverse ; it is a state of warfare against evil within and without : a warfare which admits of no truce, and which lasts as long as life (Matt. x. 34).

He who is satisfied with his own character cannot possibly be religious : "divine dissatisfaction" is the precursor of righteousness, the vestibule of Religion. Not until you are disappointed and disgusted with yourself will

you make any serious stand against the evils that are within you. This much will readily be admitted, therefore it is not necessary to insist further upon it. But according to our definition the reform of one's own character constitutes but one half of Religion. A religious man must strive not only against those evils which are within him, but also against those which are without; and this is a truth which many are unwilling to admit.

By outward evil I understand, of course, what the Bible in its pictorial eastern language calls "spiritual wickedness in high places": unjust laws, pernicious systems of education, an insolent and aggressive militarism, the hideous materialism of the medical profession, the infinite rascalities of law, the soul-slavery of sacerdotalism, and social inequalities other than those which are natural and inevitable. These and similar public evils react upon private life and undermine Religion, for they destroy the conditions in which Religion can exist.

To acquiesce in abuses or to ignore them, to stand aloof from the reform of existing institutions, betrays an absence of all sense of right and wrong. Christ, mild though he was, called the upholders of the existing order of his day hypocrites and vipers. Epictetus, the master, branded them as brigands. Not until you fully realise the rottenness of existing

institutions can you become a useful citizen and a religious man. The student of history is aware that reform has been associated with every religious movement in the past. There can be no Religion without reform, and conversely there can be no true reform without Religion. It is necessary to insist upon this vital truth, because it has been denied and is denied.

**Religion must govern the whole of life, public as well as private.** You cannot, must not, divorce politics, education, and social questions from Religion. Either God must govern your social life or else Satan will direct it. In public as in private matters either idealism or materialism must rule. To carry idealism into their public life is a task which all men shun, because the penalty is too severe. Of those who take up the sling and the stone not one escapes a cruel mauling. For idealism involves conflict with the world, a bigger giant than Goliath of Gath. Against the "flesh" man will wage war. Origen did not hesitate to mutilate himself. Against the "Devil"—that is, I suppose, "pride, haughtiness, opinion and disdain"—there are many who will strive. But who dares to quarrel with the "world"?

What subtle sophistries we all invent to shirk this dangerous duty! How persistently we shut our eyes to wrongs we dare not try to right! And when the abuse can no longer

be ignored, we exclaim with the poet Morris, "I was not born to set the crooked straight!"

No wonder that some of the best and wisest, despairing of reform and progress, turn sadly to the contemplation of an ideal which ignores this present life. Thus arises that Oriental quietism which has resulted in stagnation and decay. And to this same source we trace the monastic system of Buddhism and of Romanism. The recluse of this higher stamp has our respect and sympathy. There are chapters in the "Imitatio" which we love. Nevertheless we are convinced that the greater the piety of these men the deeper is their sin, because they withdraw themselves from public life, and rob society of all the good which they might do.

Nearer to truth than the monastic ideal was that of the Grey Friars founded by Francis of Assisi.<sup>1</sup> Their original aim was "to seek personal salvation in effort for the good of their fellow-men": and some of them carried out this aim, as far as ignorance and superstition permitted them to do so. We respect them, therefore, for their earnestness and self-sacrifice. They dimly realised the important truth which has been thus expressed by a clever authoress and a faithful witness of truth: "A man saves his own soul best by helping his neighbours."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "Green's Short History," p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs Lynn Linton in "Joshua Davidson."

Another woman writer says that, "Salvation consists in the surrender of the private for the public weal" (Zona Vallance).

## CHAPTER IV

### IDEALISM

"Du fond de l'Idéal Dieu serein nous fait signe" ["Serene God beckons from Idealism"]. — VICTOR HUGO, "Religion and Religions."

"Christian Idealism has been, and is to be, the salt of the earth in every generation."—DR PERCIVAL, Bishop of Hereford.

[True ; but the epithet Christian, thus used, has little force, for Christianity at its best is but a passing phase of Idealism.]

"Ideals are the precious stones which form the foundation of the Heavenly Jerusalem."

"The important things, the things we must believe in or perish, are beyond argument."—W. B. YEATS.

By the term Idealism I do not intend that Berkleyan system of thought which, following Parmenides, denies the reality of objective phenomena. I am treating of Religion, and I do not desire to meddle with philosophy. But it appears to me that the idealistic monism of Berkley is just as far removed from truth as the materialistic monism of Haeckel. To see only soul in the universe is as irrational as to deny the existence of soul. Neither monism nor dualism can be eliminated, and the reconciliation of the two apparently conflicting

theories lies in admitting the equal importance of psychical and physical phenomena, and seeing beneath the dualism which meets us on the surface an underlying unity in which both views are harmonised.

Idealism is indeed rather an attitude of mind than a definite philosophical system. That man is an idealist who places above all else truth, beauty, justice, honesty, purity, and such-like things. For each of these is an ideal, intuitive in the human mind, needing no proof, unassailable by logic, and self-evident. "The ideal (says Krause) shines as a beacon to light us to eternal life." For ideals are eternal, indestructible, and that human soul who steadfastly contemplates these ideals and strives to embody them in his life becomes in some measure identified with them; they become part of his nature and render him immortal. Idealism is the ark which floats high above the waters of death (Prov. iv. 13; xi. 19; xii. 28).

This assimilation to the ideal is a long, difficult, and painful process, a mystery, a miracle. Has not the poet written—

"Nur ein Wunder kann dich tragen in das schoene  
Wunderland"—

"The things which are not seen (ideals) are eternal."

—2 Cor. iv. 18.

"The visible and present are for brutes,  
A slender portion and a narrow bound."—YOUNG.



Speaking in a general way, morality teaches a man's duty to himself, Religion his duty to his neighbour. An isolated person might be immoral, thus he might give way to the abuse of alcohol. But the ideals which constitute Religion imply (as I have said above) that man is a social animal. It follows that Religion involves a system of principles for regulating conduct by reference to the interests of humanity (J. W. Sharpe). It requires but a small amount of intelligence and foresight to apprehend the advantages of morality; for here the good and evil of the individual are at stake. But on the higher plane of Religion good and evil must be judged with reference to mankind in general. Thus, in so far as a man avoids injustice and falsehood, he acts in the interest of humanity, and against his own immediate interest. I do not allude, of course, to those clumsy acts of injustice and falsehood which are punished by human law or by the reprobation of society.

This is the earlier and lower stage of Religion, largely governed by commands and prohibition: "Thou shalt not do this or that": largely influenced by the fear of penalties inflicted in the interest of society, for Religion begins in fear and ends in love.

This idealism is of a negative kind, scarce worthy of the name. But in the higher and later stage a man begins to realise his solidarity

with his fellows, and to view life from the standpoint of humanity. He considers himself a member of a great world-family, and judges good and evil not privately, but in a broader way. To some men, and especially to certain races of men, this is inconceivable, absurd. To the best of men it is so difficult as to be almost impossible. We can but hope to make a small beginning in this life.

The Aristotelian doctrine of the golden mean, or "golden mediocrity" as Bacon calls it, is true enough of *virtues* which constitute morality, but it does not apply to *ideals* with which Religion is concerned. In the pursuit of idealism it is not possible to err by reason of excess. "In virtute (Religion) non est verendum ne quid nimium sit."

In many parts of the Old and of the New Testament, the great ideals are alluded to. Thus in 1 Cor. i. 30, stress is laid upon Wisdom, which is said to be from God, that is, Divine. Justice, again, is frequently mentioned, and is mistranslated "righteousness." The Greek word is *dikaïosunē*, and the Latin of the Vulgate is *justicia*. But the special ideal of the Arab or Hebrew race was purity, as that of the Hellenic was beauty, that of the Persian, truth.

There is in human nature a tendency to magnify that ideal which comes easiest, and to ignore those which are inconvenient and demand an effort. Thus by some of the Greeks

purity was neglected, and the goddess Hestia dethroned. The foul cult of the Idean Gany-mede tainted the national life, and led to the downfall of the race. Similarly, though the conquering nations of the world may pretend to justice and make mention of mercy, yet these ideals, when they interfere with conquest and aggrandisement, are utterly ignored. This was the case in ancient Rome, and it is equally true of the ruling races of modern times.

Beware lest you mistake this spurious idealism for Religion. He alone is an idealist who obeys *all* the great ideals. When any one ideal is persistently violated, the life of a man, or of a nation, is corrupted, and in the end all ideals are lost sight of. The dominant races and most of the successful men are distinguished by specious hypocrisy and brutal materialism, for, as Epictetus reiterates, and as Christ in his pictorial language asserts, Satan is the prince of this world.

Schiller says that the gods seldom appear alone. This is true also of ideals. We do unfortunately often find sincerity without enlightenment in the dupes, and enlightenment without sincerity in the promoters of the more profitable delusions. But these isolated ideals are powerless. They may even be mischievous. Thus a dupe, for all his sincerity, is a curse to society, for he is a source of power and profit to the enemies of humanity.

It is rare that ideals can be accurately defined. They are vague because they are vast; and they are so closely related to each other as to be in many cases interchangeable. For instance :

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

—KEATS.

Victor Cousin says : “God is revealed to us by the ideals of truth, goodness and beauty (*le vrai, le bien et le beau*). These ideals are equal : each is from God and leads to God.” Emerson is of the same opinion : “Truth, goodness, and beauty are but different faces (phases?) of the same all.”

The higher gods of Hellas (Greece) represented ideals. Thus Zeus (Jupiter) stood for such rude conceptions of right and justice as were possible to men emerging from a state of barbarism and brigandage. Hestia (Vesta) was the guardian of purity. The minor deities presided over the activities of man : thus Ceres, agriculture; Hephæstus (Vulcan), handicraft; Hermes (Mercury), trade, originally the wind which moves the ship. Ares (Mars) and Aphrodite (Venus), in one sense the two lowest of the deities, symbolise the interacting forces of destruction and reproduction which control all animal life, including that of man. Finally, the demi-gods or solar heroes were idealised human characters : Prometheus, the benefactor and

champion of humanity; Heracles, the mighty deliverer; Apollo, Perseus, Theseus, etc. The abuses against which these heroes fought and strove were often figured as giants, monsters, dragons, evil beasts.

The Semitic gods and heroes do not correspond exactly with the Hellenic. Javeh (Jehovah) comes near to Zeus as a semi-savage tribal deity closely connected with nature and the sky, and as Max Müller has remarked,<sup>1</sup> intimately associated with the history of the Hebrew race. Christ, the last of the solar heroes and demi-gods, must be ranked with Prometheus, Heracles, and the Persian Mithra.

The inner meaning, then, of the Hellenic mythology is this: that as Ares, Aphrodite, and the rest were obedient to Zeus, but acknowledged by him, so the animal passions and the legitimate activities of life must be governed, and at the same time reckoned with by idealism.

Chief of idealists was Epictetus, the master, and next to him comes Christ. The former presents to us the intellectual, the latter the emotional side of Religion. The two great teachers are complementary to each other. The lame Greek slave was logical and rational; the Syrian peasant was guided rather by intuition. If your nature is weak and emotional, study as an antidote the Stoic system. If, on the other

<sup>1</sup> "Lectures on the Science of Religion."

hand, you tend too much to intellectuality, return for a while to childhood and listen to the parables of Jesus. Both paths will lead you to idealism. "Christ was distinguished from all other agitators by His perfect idealism" (Renan).

As Christ's pure and simple teaching was complicated and burlesqued by Paul of Tarsus, so the idealism of Socrates was to some extent compromised by his disciple Plato. Well might Apollodorus say : "I would rather pledge Socrates in hemlock-juice than Plato in wine." Epictetus was fortunate in that his pupil Arrian did not obscure his glory in handing down to us his message.

The idealist compares every system and every institution with a pattern of perfection which does not exist on earth, and he endeavours to realise this vision rather than to conform himself to his surroundings (Romans xii. 2), for he cannot rest satisfied with anything that can be made more perfect. Thus idealism is the parent of progress, and every step forward taken by humanity is due to the efforts of those who have striven for an ideal. The man who dreams of something above him and beyond him, is an idealist. Browning says : "'Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do." It has been said that the mind is the measure of a man. But the measure of the mind itself is its capacity for idealism. So also the greatness of a nation depends neither upon

commercial prosperity, nor yet on extended empire, but rather on the ideals which animate the mass of the people. "Power (says Disraeli) is neither the sword nor shield, for these pass away, but ideas which are divine."

In his beautiful essay on idealism, Emerson has these words :

"Idealism sees the world in God (an expression which occurs first in Malebranche); it beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, as one vast picture which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul."

Robertson (Sermon on Purity) says :

"The visible world presents a different aspect to the idealist and to the materialist; the one fixes his attention on what is beautiful, the other sees merely what is useful [to himself]. Whence comes this difference? From the soul or the want of soul within us. We can make of this world a vast chaos, a mighty maze without a plan, a mere machine, a collection of blind forces, or we can make it the living vesture of God."

The ark is the symbol of idealism, the most sacred *symbolon sōtērias*, the special "sign of salvation" (Wisdom, xvi. 6). By faith Noah entered the ark (Hebrews xi. 7), that is to say, by idealism he was raised above the materialism and degradation of his day and generation. In the ark of idealism Moses (Exodus ii. 3) escaped

the corruption of the ancient Egyptian civilisation. Thus also Perseus was carried to his glorious destiny.

The Aim of Idealism is the Good of Humanity ; the Result is the Perfecting of the Individual ; the Instrument is Will ; the Condition is Liberty ; the Path lies through Reform and Progress ; the Guides are Reason and Intuition ; the Motives are Conscience and Love ; the Support is Faith ; the Encouragement is Hope ; the End is Happiness and Peace and Joy.

## CHAPTER V

### MATERIALISM

*"Bellua multorum capitum."*

"Materialism, the philosophy of all expiring epochs and peoples in decay, is historically speaking an old phenomenon, inseparable from the death of a religious dogma. It is the reaction of those superficial intellects which, incapable of taking a comprehensive view of the life of humanity, and tracing and deducing its essential characteristics from tradition, deny the religious ideal itself, instead of simply affirming the death of one of its incarnations."—MAZZINI.

"Was ihr nicht rechnet, glaubt ihr sei nicht wahr :

Was ihr nicht fasst, das fehlt euch ganz und gar."—GOETHE.

MATERIALISM needs no accurate definition. "It is the negation of idealism, and is to it what darkness is to light, non-entity to existence, the devil to God. And in proportion to the degree of its acceptance by man, it ministers to his deterioration and destruction here and hereafter"



(E. Maitland: the word "idealism" is substituted for "spiritualism"). A materialist may be described as a man whose sense of truth and justice is rudimentary, whose perception of abstract beauty is very imperfect, and in whom the feeling of fraternity is altogether wanting. He is usually deficient in imagination, poetry, sentiment, and honour. In certain races which it is not necessary to specify, this character and the corresponding view of life are extremely common.

The materialist sees only the lower aspect of every question; he prefers compromise to conscience, expediency to principle, and his own interest to all else. Whatever his profession, religion, education, law, or medicine, he will oppose reform and progress; for it is his instinct to swim with the stream, to follow the multitude, to seek his own safety. The materialist will either hold aloof from all religion as a matter which concerns only weak-minded people, or else he will make a traffic of it, and set up his tables in the temple (Matt. xxi. 12). Materialism is more commonly associated with the strictest orthodoxy than with the theories of Darwin or Haeckel. In nine cases out of ten there is about the materialist something essentially *roturier*; he lacks nobility of character, or as Cotter Morison, a Positivist writer, puts it, there is in him no strain of hereditary altruism.

The materialist would fain live by bread alone (Matt. iv. 4), nor does he thirst for the water of

life (John iv. 14; Rev. xxii. 17). To him these mystic words are void of meaning, for he lacks the faculty by which spiritual things are discerned (1 Cor. ii. 14). He has, in Carlyle's words, "no sense for the high nor for the deep, nor for aught human or divine." "Dust thou art, to dust returnest" sums up for the materialist the nature of the destiny of humanity. The brotherhood of man is to him an idle dream, the fatherhood of God a vain delusion.

The home of the materialist, as Bunyan shrewdly remarks, is often in "the wealthy town of Fairspeech." The inspired tinker has supplied us with an infallible means of detecting the materialist: like Mr Byends "he never strives against wind and tide."

There are many phases of materialism. It varies as we trace it down the ages from the two atheists of Abdera, through Aristippus, Epicurus, Lucretius and Lucian, to the present day.

It is a many-headed monster, *bellua multorum capitum*. Religious materialism trusts to the efficacy of forms and ceremonies, and bows to the authority of book or bishop. It exalts the letter which kills against the spirit which gives life (2 Cor. iii. 6). Medical materialism tortures helpless animals, and thinks to promote health by inoculation with the virus of disease. The manifold materialism of education is only too well known to those who are connected with that profession. The trail of the serpent is on

every calling. The Prince of the Power of Darkness holds all the gates.

Materialism is thus summed up by George Dawson from the point of view of Christian Theism :

“To walk in this world and not see the glory thereof; to go through life and not perceive its lustre; to read the words of great and good men inspired by God, and not understand their deeper meaning; to watch the course of history and miss the footsteps of the Almighty through it; to have eyes and yet to see no light beyond this world, but to regard the life to come as a peradventure : is this not terrible !”

As Epictetus marks the high-water level of idealism, so Epicurus sounded the lowest depths of materialism. Between these two thinkers every human soul must occupy some intermediate position. The most daring of the destructive thinkers of modern times fall short of Epicurus : the most idealistic teachers of the present day give us but fragments of the Stoic system. The neglect of Epictetus and the failure of his few modern disciples to understand him cannot be sufficiently explained on the ground that his idealism is radically and fundamentally incompatible with the whole tone and structure of modern society. Some deeper reason must be sought; and it can be none other than this, that the type of mind represented by Epictetus does not now exist.

There is a similar antithesis between Plato

and the materialism of Aristotle. "Every man is either an Aristotelian or a Platonist: their principles are mutually repugnant, and there is no common ground between the two."

Bear in mind that such things as health, pleasure, peace, happiness, prosperity, are not ideals; because ideals are by their nature to a great extent within our power, whereas these external things are beyond our reach (John xvi. 33). Seneca says that pleasure is neither the aim nor yet the reward of Religion, but the result. And this result is not immediate, it is distant, unseen except by faith.

Ideals are related to Religion, as virtues to morality. Religion is opposed to sin, as virtue to vice. Virtue (prudence, temperance, moderation, diligence, etc.) is "its own reward": ideals, on the other hand, involve suffering and loss. There is no doctrine more hated by the worldling, more strenuously denied by the materialist. Yet it lies at the root of Christianity and of the Stoic religion. Christ said: "He that will save his life must lose it." And Epictetus uttered the same truth in words which are almost identical. "Virtue [that is to say, idealism, religion] and happiness are antithetic in the highest degree, since the one can be attained only by the abnegation of the other."<sup>1</sup> If you reject this doctrine, you repudiate the highest teaching of the Aryan and of the Semitic races; you cut

<sup>1</sup> F. P. Cobbe, "Intuitive Morals," chap. i.

yourself off, not only from Christianity, but from that universal religion of which Christianity is a branch.

More deadly than any other teaching of materialism is the theory which reconciles Religion with self-interest. Beware of this insidious delusion as you value the safety of your soul.

I have just stated that idealism and the sacrifice which it involves are scornfully repudiated by men of the world. Here is an example. In an essay entitled "The Unknown God," Sir H. Thompson, a medical man who may be regarded as typical of his class, quotes Psalm xxxvii. 35-37, to prove that the upright man is usually successful in this life, in other words, that Religion can be reconciled with self-interest. This champion of materialism shelters himself behind a congenial passage from the Old Testament. We can point out to him another text even better suited to his purpose: "Be not righteous over much" (Eccl. vii. 16): cultivate just as much Religion as will suffice to throw dust in the eyes of the simple ones with whom you have to deal, but don't be so unwise as to imitate those "enthusiasts" whose Religion brings them into conflict with the world. Sir Henry applies the term "enthusiast" to the prophet of Galilee. Charming condescension! We know that for the scientific materialist in his more candid moods, Christ, Epictetus, and

all other idealists, are neurotic imbeciles. We understand full well the "uprightness" which conduces to worldly success. It is a quality never pushed far enough to be inconvenient; an ideal so low that it involves little effort and no sacrifice. The "uprightness" which these materialists affect is perfectly compatible with intense and brutal egotism, and for this reason it succeeds. Grunt contentedly in your sty; this world is yours, but the idealist does not envy you!

There is nothing easier than to throw stones at the prophets and to cry, "Go up, thou bald-head!" The materialist *a beau jeu!* For the water of life is held in earthen vessels. He can point out that idealism was associated in the case of Ruskin and Carlyle with sexual impotence; in the case of Christ and Tolstoy with unscientific theories; in the case of Alfred Russell Wallace with Spiritism; in the case of Plato (Phaedrus, etc.) with loathsome bestiality. But the answer is very obvious. The materialist is sane because he is commonplace, he is sound because he is low. The higher faculties in all organised beings are peculiarly liable to disease, and these higher faculties are wanting to the materialist. The lower and simpler the organism the more perfectly does it work. Every spider knows how to weave a web; all flies can buzz; each centipede has his proper number of legs; most vile creatures are complete and well-

equipped, and the materialist is no exception to the rule.

Hating the lofty doctrines of idealism, and seeking some pretext to avoid unwelcome conclusions, the materialist persuades himself that all idealists are "cranks and psychopaths": then well satisfied with his own wisdom and sanity, he crawls back to his lymphs and his serums, his inoculations and his vivisections.

Truly materialism also has its delusions; and these are without exception more degrading to the individual and more dangerous to society than the wildest aberrations of idealism. The idealist may rejoice with exceeding great joy that he is raised above this vileness, and can never again sink down and be submerged by it.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SEVEN STAGES

"I am come from the city of destruction which is the place of all evil; and I am going to the city of Zion."—JOHN BUNYAN.

"Imagination separates us from mortality by the immortality of Beauty."—W. B. YEATS.

"To a sound judgment the most abstract truth is the most practical."—EMERSON.

"At last the vision is revealed, the vision of a single knowledge, which is the science of Beauty everywhere."—DIOTIMA, *Priestess of Mantinea*.

IN the upward progress and development of the soul there are seven stages:—

*First*: By the exercise of the will we obtain control over the appetites and passions.

This is morality. "He who controls the native instantaneous mechanical impulses has morality."<sup>1</sup> Those who deliberately violate the laws of morality must fall short also of Religion. As we are not discussing philosophy, it is unnecessary to do more than remark that idealism takes for granted the freedom of the will. "The intuition of freedom, though wholly unsupported, is itself nothing short of proof."<sup>2</sup> A Gaelic saying runs: "The life of a man is his will" ["beatha duine a thoil"].

*Second*: Through conscience or sense of duty we attain to certain crude and rudimentary ideas of right and wrong. This is the lowest and earliest stage of Religion, a halting-place, a temporary abode of the soul, for conscience alone is a sail without a rudder. An unenlightened conscience may prompt men to perpetrate the hideous cruelties of the Inquisition. In this stage millions live and die. Their god is Zeus (Jupiter) or Javeh (Jehovah), no deity, but the tribal god of a rough and primitive people. The scales are the symbol of this stage.

There is a type of character in which the reasoning power is very limited and intuition altogether absent; yet conscience, from being

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, "Literature and Dogma," chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> F. P. Cobbe. "Intuitive Morals," chap. iii.



implicitly obeyed, has become strongly developed, just as in blind folk the sense of touch is perfected. These stand firmly on the lowest step: they have as much Religion as their defective nature admits. We both admire and pity them. If there be any truth in the parable of the Talents, it is likely that in the next stage of existence they will pity us. Others, again, have the intellectual faculties, but conscience from neglect is atrophied. It was said of a great statesman lately, "There is a hole in his head where his conscience ought to be." Satan has exactly such a character.

*Third:* By the exercise of reason we reach an elementary knowledge of truth and falsehood, and rise above the popular superstitions and delusions. An enormous number of people develop thus far; in fact this class includes all the most intelligent folk in every part of the world.

But few among them declare themselves, so that their numbers appear to be very limited. They do not speak out, because they fear loss and persecution; they wish to avoid conflict with the world.

These are they whose eyes are opened: they are enlightened, emancipated, and their symbol is the fish of Chaldæa, Syria, Ireland, Scandinavia, etc., a token much used by the earliest Christians. But this also is a caravanserai of the soul, and no dwelling-place, for enlighten-

ment alone cannot redeem a man. These earlier stages of conscience and reason correspond to the "Mosaic dispensation," that is the lower or exoteric part of religion.

*Fourth:* Guided by the intuition of abstract beauty, lured on by the "beauty of holiness," attracted by the music of the divine harmonies, a few of the enlightened ones grasp the heavenly wisdom, the "Holy Grail," which can be held only by those who give up all worldly advantage and success. Possessed by Plato's fourth kind of madness, and "beholding the beauty of this lower world, they are reminded of the true. Looking upward to it, and dwelling on that which is divine, they despise worldly pursuits, and are found fault with by the multitude as being out of their senses" ("Phaedrus," 62 and 63.) Like those pilgrims of Bunyan's, they are content to pass as "bedlams," for they purchase nothing at the fair, and they are peculiar in appearance and in speech.

These are they of the "second birth" or palingenesis, they who have sold all to purchase the priceless pearl, the seedlings of the parable which are not choked. These have set their foot upon the path and taken the first step towards the higher life: they are the "initiates" who have made a good beginning (*initium*), who have entered the ark of idealism and reconciled their souls to the "great renunciation." Here is the "narrow gate," and few

there are that find it: *khalepa ta kala!* This is no public rite, but an initiation which no man can confer upon his brother.

The man who makes open profession of this stage proclaims to the world the fact that he has not reached it. Will you assume with a wave of the hand what Epictetus the master hardly dared to claim? Will you step in front of Paul? (Phil. iii. 13). The golden goblet is the symbol of this stage: the cup which is the cup of suffering; the "Holy Grail."

The supremacy of Intuition over Reason is affirmed, perhaps with too much emphasis, in a very clever essay by W. B. Yeats on Blake, to whom the theory is traced.

Where the intuition of abstract beauty is wanting or defective, the higher stages of Religion become impossible: vile things are no longer vile, and loathsome things inspire no loathing, between *fas* and *nefas* the border-line is blurred. Vaccination and seropathy, incest, vivisection, paiderastia, etc., are seen by the idealist as disgusting outrages on nature. To reason about such things is almost to lower oneself to the level of those who do them. The man who argues against an abomination is almost as hopelessly materialistic as he who argues in favour of it, for he allows that it is a legitimate subject of discussion. The idealist spits and turns aside: *ter spuas!* No man reasons about a stench. If crimes, such as

those just mentioned, are defended or condoned, we must infer either spiritual degradation or the abortion of the higher faculties of the soul. These grovellers suppose that because they are numerous they are not mad: they take it for granted that the crowd is sane. If you will not read Epictetus, go ponder that "solennia insanire" of Horace. It is indeed unlikely that you will appreciate the "Stoic majesty of mind."

*Fifth:* To those only who have attempted to realise the earlier ideals, the supreme ideal, fraternity, is revealed. Not they are comrades who have certain hopes and fears in common, but they who share the great ideals. *Eadem velle et eadem nolle*, Catiline's famous definition applies well enough to that low "comradeship" which may exist among brigands or swine of the same sty. But idealists must meet upon a higher level. The individual is mystically united to humanity, devoted to the service of mankind, as the ghazi or berserk to the service of his clan. These have learnt the common language of nature, they feel a sense of kinship with all sentient beings. Rarely is this ideal reached except through much suffering and sorrow (Acts xiv. 22). Known only by their lives are the numbers of this confraternity, for this stage, like the last, is private.

Christ represented this phase of Religion as the grafting of a vine upon a stock which is humanity: and the parable may suggest the

vine-leaf as a symbol here. The spirit of fraternity is embodied in the very beautiful hymn of Ugo Bassi, reported by Harriet King in her inspired poem, *The Disciples*.

This stage and the last, depending on intuition and love, form what Christians call the "Gospel Dispensation," that is to say, the higher or esoteric part of Religion. For the intuition of abstract beauty is a higher faculty than reason, and love will carry a man farther than conscience. Jacob served seven years for his first wife, and for the second he worked another seven. Let the lower religion of conscience and reason be to you as Leah: let Rachel represent that of intuition and love. Rest not till you have won them both.

*Sixth:* There is a yet higher stage, the theistic; the coping-stone of idealism as it seems to us, but unessential to Religion. Only the great saints and heroes can reach this level. To them it is given to enter the "holy of holies," the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple. They have the "spirit of adoption" (Romans viii. 15); they enjoy the "heavenly vision," those *commercias coeli* of which the poet speaks. To us theism is a theory which we accept because there is (for us) no other solution to the sphinx-riddle of the universe: but to the Great and Good ones, to Epictetus, to Socrates, Aurelius, Christ, Spinoza, God is an intense reality, the only reality. Their souls, unclouded

by sin and vice, are able to ascend into a higher sphere.

The pathway to this region does not lie through contemplation or meditation or asceticism, nor yet through prayer and "spiritual exercises" of any kind, but through fraternity and the service of man. Speaking in the name of humanity, as every honest man may do, Christ says, "No man can come to the Father but by me." This text is by far the most important one between the covers of the Bible, for if rightly understood it would reverse the whole current of religious thought and put an end to the make-believe which now mocks at Heaven.

The *Seventh* and last stage is not yet: it is to come. This is the "Kingdom of Heaven," the higher life, the aim of all existence, the imago of our present larval state. This is the "peace that is promised to the saints," the "rest that remains for the people of God," the result of this life's misery and suffering, the outcome of the "great renunciation." Not nirvana, but activity; service and usefulness without competition and strife; progress without relapse; life not based upon the destruction of other life, and therefore undarkened by the shadow of death.

The first of these seven stages is that of *Kingship*, for he is king who rules himself. *Priesthood* answers to the second and third: the exoteric or lower doctrines of Religion reached

through conscience and reason. The *Prophetic* stages are the fourth and fifth, attained by intuition and by love. Thus the follower of the Great and Good is, like them, "Prophet, Priest, and King."

In the *Chambered Nautilus*, one of the noblest Psalms which the nineteenth century has produced, O. W. Holmes associates the spiral shell with the progressive development of the human soul. This is the last verse :

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll.  
Leave thy low-vaulted past !  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from Heaven with a dome more vast :  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine out-grown shell by life's unresting sea."

The spiral might well serve as a symbol of Progress "putting us in remembrance of the commandment of God's law."

You may not omit one single step in the ascending series. The evangelical "conversion" aims at the fourth stage while ignoring the third, and is therefore a mere vulgar profanation, all the worse because it makes public a matter which should be private. The churchman's eucharist is a bid for fraternity without the preparatory stages which make brotherhood possible. It is therefore nugatory : a hollow, grinning mockery.

Religion is concerned with Ideals, Morality

with Virtues. The following are the Higher Attributes of the Soul (called by materialists functions of the brain), with allied Ideals and Virtues.

ATTRIBUTES.	IDEALS.	SYMBOLS.
v. <i>Love</i> , "Charity" (Kharitas), or Sense of Kinship.	Fraternity, Benevolence, Mercy, Humility, Modesty, Reverence, etc.	The Vine-leaf: the Heart.
iv. <i>Intuition</i> , "Wisdom" (Sophia), or Sense of Abstract Beauty.	Beauty, Harmony, Honesty, Sincerity, Purity, etc.	The Cup or "Holy Grail": Hestia (Vesta).
iii. <i>Reason</i> , "Word" (Logos), or Sense of Truth.	Truth, Knowledge, (Science), Enlightenment, etc.	The Fish, "Salmon of Knowledge": The Mirror: Athene (Minerva).
ii. <i>Conscience</i> (Suneidēsis), or Sense of Duty.	Right, Justice, Equity, Law, Order, etc.	The Scales: Zeus (Jupiter), Javeh (Jehovah), etc.
VIRTUES.		
i. <i>Will</i> or Choice (Proairesis).	Temperance, Cleanliness, Industry, Courage, Patience, Prudence, etc.	The Crown (Ecclesiasticus, xix. 5).

*N.B.*—Details and distinctions such as that between the Intellectual and Emotional Faculties are here disregarded. By Intuition is meant that faculty which is immediately cognisant of first principles.

Lower Instincts of the Soul. These are legitimate; they are common to all animals. They may not be crushed or got rid of or



ignored. But unless they are, by an effort of the Will, subordinated to the Higher Ideals, they are the cause of sins which injure society, and vices which degrade the individual.

INSTINCTS. (Orbits)	SINS.	SYMBOLS.
i. <i>Defensive</i> : self-preservation, self-defence, competition, individualism: the force which depopulates.	Egotism, ill-will, hatred, cruelty, pride, arrogance, aggression, greed, avarice, untruth, fraud, etc.	Ares (Mars).
ii. <i>Appetitive</i> : sexual, reproductive: the force which populates.	<p style="text-align: center;">VICES.</p> Sensuality, impurity, sloth, apathy, ignorance, superstition, cowardice, luxury, etc.	Aphrodite (Venus).

By regarding the lower instincts as legitimate when under control, we part company with those fanatical non-resisters who deny the right of self-defence; and also with those ascetics who preach celibacy and the monastic life. Mazzini, though himself a celibate like Paul, was saner on both these points than Tolstoy.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE GREAT AND GOOD

"He that once is good is ever great."—BEN JONSON.

"Goodness does not consist in greatness, but greatness in goodness."—ATHENAEUS.

"If I am asked who is the greatest man, I answer the best: and if I am required to say who is the best, I reply he that has deserved most of his fellow-creatures."—SIR WM. JONES.

"Count me those only who are Great and Good."—POPE.

IF we consider the religious systems of the past, we shall find that they harmonise perfectly with the definition given in the earlier chapters.

In each race the memory of the Great and Good was cherished, the lives of the national heroes were adorned, as time rolled on, with those virtues which were most admired, and the imitation of these ideal characters formed the most practical and valuable element in Religion. Christianity (I mean that of the Gospels, not the parody which the Churches present) is no exception to this rule. Idealism illustrated and enforced by the example of Christ is the keynote of the New Testament,

For who and what was Christ? (Matt. xxii. 42). It has truly been said that a man's attitude towards Religion may be inferred from his answer to this vital question.

Christ, then, was one of the Great and Good. He was a prophet and religious reformer, the

record of whose life is embellished by miracle and marvel, and coloured with Oriental imagery. In other words, the Christ of the Gospels is to some extent mythical. But through the clouds of myth and mystery, we can detect the features of a hero, a great and good man, who devotes himself for his fellows, "one of the good shepherds who give their lives for the sheep" (John x. 11).

The characteristics of the true hero are two: he must have great powers (Mark i. 7, and Psalm lxxxix. 19), and he must use these powers to benefit mankind: he must realise that he was born not for himself, but for the world at large:

"Non sibi sed toti genitum se credere mundo."

—LUCAN ii. 380.

The hero may not have a pleasant life. Niebuhr says of Heracles: "His father did not wish him to live at ease, without using the great powers which he had given him, but his life in this world must be hard" ("Heroengeschichten"). Such men are few; in many generations one perhaps arises: but they appear, like the sacred apis, from time to time, for "God does not leave Himself without a witness" (Acts xiv. 17).

The hero must follow the divine leading: it is for us to walk humbly in his footsteps. He must be both good and great, for his Master is Deus Optimus Maximus, the Best and Greatest;

the Architect of the Universe, into whose vast temple great and small are built.

Some men are great, many are good, few are both great and good; but these few are they who make epochs in the history of the world.

"Count me those only who are good and great."—POPE.

"Men in History," says Emerson, "men in the world of to-day, are insects, as it were: in a century, in a millennium, one or two men appear, that is to say, one or two approximations to the right state of every man." The same writer gives it as the characteristic of the truly great man that he sees spiritual to be stronger than material force, that thought rules the world.

A true Epiphany takes place, that is, a "manifestation of the godlike to man," whenever the star of divine inspiration presides over the birth of some teacher destined to lead men to a higher ideal. Thus, the heavenly light flashed over the lonely manger of Christ (Matt. ii. 19), as the flame of genius flickered on the brow of the low-born Servius Tullius.

Among the mythical or semi-mythical heroes of antiquity are Heracles, Achilles, Odysseus, Theseus, Perseus, Abraham, Moses, David, Mithra, Buddha, Christ, Tell.<sup>1</sup>

In each of these early myths, including that of Christ, there are three elements:

<sup>1</sup> See the Introduction to the beautifully written "Tales of Greece," by Cox.

First, the original groundwork of History, sometimes almost or quite obliterated, as in the case of Heracles and Tell, sometimes dimly discernible, as in the Gospel story of Christ.

Secondly, a mass of miracles and marvels, which are attributed to the hero, and which are generally more or less tinged with solar symbolism.

Thirdly, a lesson in Religion.

In estimating each of these three elements we go astray. First, we ignore the religious teaching in the lives of all those heroes whom we are pleased to call "Pagan." Next, we treat the supernatural element in the life of Christ as if it were historical. And lastly, we deny the historical element in all ancient hero legends, excepting those of Palestine. It is not possible for persons trained up in these three cardinal errors to have any reasonable ideas on Religion, Mythology, and History.

As regards the religious question, we shall take it for granted that lessons of devotion and unselfishness (what else do we mean by Religion?) are to be learned from the lives of all great and good men, of whatever race and age. Secondly, ultra-scepticism in history is thus rebuked by a writer who is an atheist, and can therefore not be accused of credulity :

"It is difficult to admit that those ancient heroes who occupy the uncertain borderland

between mythology and history were nothing more than pure inventions of poetry.”<sup>1</sup>

As to the credulity of those who take the Christian legends for history, we must leave them to settle their accounts with common-sense as best they may. To us it is obvious that the Gospel miracles are the ornaments added by the Eastern imagination to the life of a heroic character.

Archdeacon Wilson says :

“Modern criticism is practically unanimous in asserting that a non-historical element, no longer separable, has mixed with the narrative of the New Testament. And in this respect the sacred books of Christianity are like those of Mosaicism or Buddhism or Islam or other religions : for there gathered some halo of legend round a nucleus of fact.”

Christ was the last of the semi-mythical heroes and prophets. Though later in date than Socrates, he belongs to an earlier stage of thought and feeling, for the Athenian sage stands, as it were, on the threshold of the modern world. On the other hand, the mysterious figure of Jesus looms—

“In the twilight of age [when] all things seem strange and phantasmal—

As between daylight and dark, ghost-like the landscape appears.”

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<sup>1</sup> Combes, “La Grèce Ancienne.”

Many of the ancient heroes were deified, that is, called demi-gods or even gods (1 Cor. viii. 5), and many men who were neither great nor good were called gods. We still use the term "Lord" in the same way. But neither Christ, the "Son of Man," as he calls himself (John v. 27, and vi. 27), nor any other man, however great and good, must be confounded with God, who is the Spirit of the Universe, the Being in whom all ideals culminate.

The term "solar hero" or "sun god" is often applied to Heracles and to other ancient heroes, because their bright and glorious life was compared with the course of the sun, which is to us the symbol of light and truth as opposed to darkness and error. For when such a man appears it is as if a "sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv. 2) had arisen on the earth. Thomson well expresses the feelings which led the early races of men to regard the sun as a symbol of light and truth, and an image of the Deity:

"Prime cheerer light,  
Of all material beings first and best,  
Efflux divine, nature's resplendent robe,  
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapped  
In unessential gloom! And thou, O Sun!  
Soul of surrounding worlds, in whom best seen  
Shines out thy Maker."

The picturesque custom of repeating the Creed with the face turned towards the East is a relic of the ancient sun-worship. There are other

traces in Christianity; for instance, churches, chapels, and cathedrals are built with the longer axis east and west.

Similarly in the barrows and burial-places of pre-historic races we find that the bodies were placed with their faces towards the East.

Bishop Heber's hymn, though excluded from some of our fashionable hymnals, is very appropriate to the Epiphany. (In the second verse an alteration is made):

"Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,  
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid :  
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,  
Guide where the infant Redeemer is laid.

"Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are shining,  
Low lies His bed with the beasts of the stall ;  
Angels surround Him in slumber reclining,  
Saviour, Redeemer, and brother of all.

"Say, shall we bring Him in costly devotion  
Odours of Edom and offerings divine,  
Gems of the mountain, and pearls of the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would His favour secure,  
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

In many points the solar heroes agree; for instance, as the sun goes through twelve months in the year, so Buddha and Christ have twelve disciples, Heracles twelve labours, Jacob the twelve patriarchs, Odysseus the twelve axe-



handles through which he drove his bolt, Romulus the twelve ancilia, and so forth. These are the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

Again, the storm ceases when the sun shines forth: so Oceanus obeys the commands of Heracles; and in like manner Christ rebukes the wind, and says to the waves "Peace, be still!" (Mark iv. 39). In infancy the solar hero is frequently threatened by the powers of darkness. Thus Herod "massacres the innocents" in an attempt to destroy the child Jesus (Matt. ii. 16); and two snakes, symbols of evil, attempt to strangle the infant Heracles as he lies in his foster-father's shield.

Apollo and Zeus himself were similarly exposed to danger in their infancy. Romulus and Moses were cast into the water; and about 3800 B.C., that is long before the time of Moses, the infant Sharrukin or Sargon, king of northern Chaldæa, was placed in a basket of rushes and launched upon the Euphrates. A princess or goddess rescued him. Cyrus, Semiramis, and Bacchus may be mentioned among other instances of heroes drawn from the water.

Again the solar hero generally comes, like the sun, from the East, "rejoicing like a giant to run his course" (Psalm xix. 5). Thus the star or constellation announcing the birth of Christ appears in the East. Heracles travels westward to the ocean-shore in search of the red-coloured oxen of King Geryon, the golden clouds of the

sunset. So also Odysseus wanders with the sun—from Troy to his home in rocky Ithaca. It is remarkable that the migrations of men appear to follow the same law.

“Westward the course of empire takes its way.”—BERKLEY.

We have given here only a few instances where Christ is represented as a solar hero; those who read the Gospels attentively will find many others. Thus the swine, symbols of impurity, shrink from the presence of the Bright and Holy One, and rush down a steep place (Matt. viii. 32), just as the boar of Erymanthus ran from Heracles and fell into a chasm. Observe the sunrise in the Alps, and you will see the dark shadows of night retreating down the mountain-side, and losing themselves at last in the depths of some gloomy gorge. In depicting this miracle, Briton Rivière, with true insight, has brought out both the natural and the religious aspect of the myth, for he has coloured the swine *black*. The dark mass of animals hangs like a shadow on the brow of the hill.

The following passage from G. Massey (“Natural Genesis”) illustrates the close connection between mythology and astronomy:

“On Christmas day, when the Christ, the Buddha or Mithra was born, the birthday of the sun in the winter solstice, the constellation of the Virgin arose upon the horizon. She was represented as holding the new-born child in her

arms, and being pursued by the serpent, which opened its mouth just beneath her in the position of being trodden under foot. This symbolism was applied to Isis and Horus in Egypt, to Maya and Buddha in India and China, to the Woman and Child in the book of Revelations (chap. xii.), to Mary and Jesus in Rome."

This heavenly Virgin, called the mother of the sun-god, because she presided over his birth, is the "Sainte Vierge" or the "heilige Jungfrau" of the Romanists, and she is correctly represented in most South European churches with a background of stars, or else with a pattern of stars on her robe. The word "Regina Coeli" or "Regina Angelorum," are frequently seen under pictures and statues of the Virgin in Italy.

In like manner the "Lamb of God" (Rev. v. 6, John i. 29) is connected with the sign Aries, and so on.

The question of solar symbolism in ancient religions was first explained by the French philosopher, Dupuis, in his "Origine des Cultes." He traces the astronomical element in Christianity, compares it with that of other Eastern religious systems, and shows that, as far as mythology is concerned, Christianity is in no sense isolated but forms a branch of the primitive and universal nature-worship. It is to be regretted that this learned and brilliant writer denies the historical element in all the solar myths, including Christianity, and that

his reasoning on religious questions is mainly destructive.

Of all the great heroes, prophets, saviours, messiahs, and avatars, Buddha and Christ correspond most closely. The agreement between the story of Christ and the earlier one of Buddha is indeed so close that we must consider the Christian legend to be a repetition of the older myth. Both were born about 25th December, as was also Mithra. Christ, like Buddha, was long foretold and expected. Each was supposed to have been born of a virgin by the Spirit of God, the Creative Spirit, God the Father (parthenogenesis). Mary, like Maia the mother of Buddha, was confined at an inn while travelling (Luke ii. 7). Angels sing, as in the Gospel (Luke ii. 13 and 14), "This day Buddha is born on earth, to give joy and peace to men." Kings adore the child Buddha; and in the Gospel also (Matt. ii. 1) the three kings bring offerings. Celestial signs accompany the birth of Christ (Matt. ii. 2) as of Buddha. At the age of twelve, Christ, like the young Buddha, was presented at the Temple, and astonished the learned with His questions (Luke ii. 46). When about thirty years of age both Buddha and Christ went out into the wilderness and were tempted by the evil spirit; after this they began to teach. Both Buddha and Christ are baptized, entering a river, attended by holy spirits (Luke iii. 21). The teaching of the two solar heroes is similar,

indeed in many respects identical, and the parables of Christ (Matt. xiii. 3) closely resemble those of Buddha. Only in the manner of his death, which was tranquil and quiet, does the story of Buddha differ from that of Christ.

On these and similar coincidences Dupuis remarks :

“It is easy to perceive that, when two legends have so complete a resemblance, the older must be the mother, and the younger or more modern one the daughter.”

Again, the story of Christ corresponds so closely with the earlier legend of Mithra, that early Christian apologists were driven to invoke the help of Satan in order to explain the agreement. The Devil foresaw the life of Christ, and compelled the Persian hero to anticipate it! Those who like this explanation are welcome to it!

Krishna also, the Sun-god and Saviour, was virgin-born. His mother was of royal race, his father a god. Shepherds were associated with his early days. His infant life was threatened by a tyrant king, an earlier Herod. Krishna was the Saviour of great multitudes. He brought the dead to life. He descended into hell. He was put to death. He rose again, and ascended into heaven. The later legend of Palestine attributes the same wonders to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Jones, “Asiatic Researches.”

Once more, ages before the birth of Christ, the Egyptian Horus was the Good Shepherd (John x. 14), the Lamb of God (John i. 29), the Bread of Life (John xi. 25), the Truth and the Life (John xiv. 6), the Door of Life (John x. 9), the Fan-bearer (Matt. iii. 12).

The truth is, that the legend of a toiling or a suffering hero was common to all Eastern races. And this sacred story reached its highest and most beautiful development, as might be expected, among the thoughtful Hindoos and among the spiritual and imaginative inhabitants of Palestine.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BIRTH, LIFE, AND DEATH

"Aim at perfection, strive ever :  
But if all your striving be fruitless,  
Seek a more perfect man,  
Follow him whither he leads."—GOETHE.

THE story of Buddha, of Christ, or of Heracles is at once a summary of the history of humanity and a type of the life of man.

At first the hero hesitates to undertake his arduous mission: the "natural man" shrinks from the contest with evil, and wishes for a moment that the cup of suffering may pass (Matt. xxvi. 39, and John xii. 27.)

"The man who has sacrificed to some great

ideal both comfort and success in life is discouraged and saddened when death first looks him in the face and seeks to convince him that everything is vain" (Renan, "Jesus"). This is why Achilles hides in woman's clothing when the war breaks out, Jonah flees on board ship, Moses is unwilling to appear before Pharaoh. But once embarked on his course, the hero never turns aside, for he knows that he "must be about his Father's business" (Luke ii. 49).

The hero is, as a rule, short-lived: "whom the gods love die young." Thus Achilles was doomed to an early death; he was "the most short-lived of all," and Christ was crucified at the age of thirty. Both knew that a short life may be more glorious than a long one: *ad bene vivendum breve tempus satis est*. "Their souls are pleasing to God, therefore He hastens to take them to Himself" (Wisdom iv. 14).

Nor does he see good days, for he is constantly at variance with the temporal and spiritual powers. Achilles was wronged by Agamemnon, David by Saul, Heracles by Aigistheus, etc. Both priests and rulers combined against Christ, as they ever must against all who in any degree resemble him (Amos v. 10): He is destined to be "despised and rejected by men" (Luke ix. 22, and Isaiah liii. 3).

"Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land :

All fear, none aid you, and few understand."—POPE.

Both Christ and Socrates were "heretics,"

that is, men who ventured to think for themselves, and both were put to death for heresy.

Christ had spoken against the temple (Mark xiii. 2, and xiv. 58), that is, against the established Church of his day: Socrates had taught newer and higher ideas, which his enemies called "corrupting the youth." Both these men bravely accepted the penalty of their heresy: neither was under the fatuous delusion that it is possible to derive a profit from telling people the truth.

Both Socrates and Christ were idealists, and their idealism clashed with the materialism of the masses. Christ's heresy was not an opposition to Religion, but to the sacerdotalism of the clergy, the formalism of the wealthy, the superstitions of the ignorant. His was the heresy of those who have more faith than the multitude, not of those that have less. He came "not to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. v. 17); not to deny, but to affirm; not only to pull down, but also to build up. His method was not one of negations, not "that plan of arguing against everything and coming to no definite conclusion" of which Cicero justly complains. Christ strove, in fact, to help and to raise men in the only way in which it is possible to help and to raise them—viz., by reforming the Religion which rules our daily life.

The solar hero, though often born among the *plebs*, must be of high descent: a truly noble man comes not of mean or slavish ancestors: *Fortes*



*creantur fortibus et bonis.* Some races and some families are more capable of noble deeds, and less selfish than the rest. Therefore the pedigree of Christ is traced to David the king on earth (Matt. i. 1), and to God the King of Heaven (Luke iii. 23). We cannot, of course, take these genealogies seriously, but we must not make the great mistake of neglecting the lesson which they teach, that nobility of character is hereditary no less than vice and depravity. When a noble race or family dies out or degenerates, humanity is a loser.

When we speak of a noble family, we mean one which has lived by some honest labour, some profession which does not involve a daily round of insincerity and intrigue, some trade (if such there be) which does not kill all the higher qualities, some occupation which does not involve complete estrangement from Nature.

We preserve the pedigrees of horses and of dogs, shall we be less careful to record the parentage of man? If we understand "worship" in the sense of reverence, then the Eastern ancestor-worship is essential to idealism. For the family is sacred, connecting us through race and humanity with the divine. To weaken family life is to undermine Religion. Now a race is, as it were, a family of families, and humanity is the sum of races of man. The close connection between race and Religion is pointed out by Seely in his "Natural Religion."

“The province of religion (he says) is much more national and political, much less personal, than is commonly supposed. **Religion is not a man's private philosophy**, whether that be based on reason or on revelation. Religions may be called nationalities in an idealised form. We should find this on every page of the Bible, if we did not interpret it away.”

It is obvious that in this passage the word “nation” must be understood to mean race, for there is nothing sacred about nationality, nor is it in any way connected with Religion. The Irish, the Fins, the Poles, the Boers belong to alien nationalities; they have been compelled by brute force to accept this alien nationality, and brute force alone can retain their allegiance to it. Government without the consent of the governed is despotism, and from this despotism all oppressed races must hope to escape, as Italy has thrown off the yoke of Austria. Nationality may be due to the accident of conquest, to the fortune of war; but with race the language and traditions of the past are bound up; with race is associated the special conformation of mind and body, the peculiar ideals which constitute Religion. Goethe has said that each individual can be good and happy only in his own way. So every race can be useful to humanity only if permitted to obey its own higher instincts and to fulfil its own destinies. That man is noblest who best maintains the traditions of his family; that race stands highest, whatever

be its fortune, which most faithfully preserves its ideals and its ancient language. And this is perfectly consistent with the broadest and most cosmopolitan spirit. Will the traitor to his race and family be true to the interests of humanity? Nay, but the foes of humanity are those aggressive peoples who enslave their weaker neighbours.

The whole tendency of modern materialism is towards individualism and isolation :

“Chacun à son cadran, chacun à sa banquette,  
L’homme dans un casier avec une étiquette,  
Délié de son son père, ignorant sou aïeul,  
C’est là le dernier mot du progrès, l’homme seul.”

—VICTOR HUGO.

These blind ones with their wolfish instincts do not understand that family and race are the links which unite us to humanity :

“Ils ne comprennent pas que la sainte série  
Des aïeux, à travers le sépulchre attendrie,  
Suit tous des yeux, s’émeut à voir hors du tombeau  
Courir de main en main le frisonnant flambeau  
Et que dans les enfants le père continue.”

The father of an ancient hero is frequently supposed to be a god, and the mother bears this godlike son before her marriage with a mortal.

Christ was by no means the only example of this *parthenogenesis*: Heracles, Romulus, and most of the great heroes were “sons of God.” Conversely, a particularly bad man was said to be a “son of Belial” (Deut. xiii. 13), and Plutarch

has a legend of a man who was begotten by a demon.

"We must have kings and we must have nobles ; Nature is always providing such in every society. Only let us have the real instead of the titular, let us have our leading and our inspiration from the best."<sup>1</sup>

In youth the hero is tempted, but resists. Thus, Christ is offered the "kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them" (Matt. iv. 1), and Heracles is met in early life, at the parting of the ways, the "bivium Pythagorae," or letter Y, by Aphrodite, enticing to the flowery path, and Athene pointing to the rocky one. Read the famous Parable of Prodicus, told by Socrates in "Xenophon" Mem. ii. 1.

"Aus dem Leben heraus sind der Wege zwei dir geöffnet :  
Zum Ideale führt einer, der andre zum Tod.  
Siehe dass du bei Zeit noch frei auf den ersten entspringest  
Ehe die Parze mit Zwang dich auf den andern entführt."

—SCHILLER.

Here are two lame translations for those who do not know German :

"Two paths lie open as you start in life ;  
This leads to an ideal, that to death :  
Haste to set out upon the former one,  
Ere fate compel you to the second road."

"Onward from life two paths lie open to every mortal ;  
Towards an ideal the one leads, but the other to death :  
Hasten the former to choose, and start full soon on your  
journey,  
Ere the decree of fate force you the latter to take."

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<sup>1</sup> Emerson, "Nature."

As the youth of the hero is well spent, so his manhood is great and glorious (John i. 14 ; Luke ix. 32).

He is "girded with strength" like the son of Jesse (Psalm xviii. 39), and radiant like Apollo.

He has the *might* of Dionusos, lord of wine (John ii.); the *majesty* of the horned Moses ; a *dominion* greater than that of earthly emperor, for he sways the minds of men ; and the *power* of those who wrestle with God and prevail (Gen. xxxii. 24), who strive towards an ideal and attain it.

He rises, like Lucifer, to lighten the darkness of the world (John xii. 46). He comes from the East from Edom, from the borders of the desert of life ; he travels in the greatness of his strength ; he treads alone the winepress of suffering, and of the people there is none with him (Isaiah lxiii. 3). He dwells in the light of pure reason, which mortals can hardly approach (1 Tim. vi. 16).

He is a *prophet*, mighty in word and deed before God and man (Luke xxiv. 19) ; a *priest* "after the order of Melchizedek," that is, "not made so after the law of a carnal commandment," nor by the laying-on of human hands (Heb. vii. 16) ; a *king*, on whose head are many crowns (Rev. xix. 12), for he rules himself, "rex eris si recte facies" (Hor. i. Epist. 1), and he has overcome the love of life and the fear of death. Therefore he is called, in Hebrew, "Messiah," and in Greek, "Christos," the "anointed" one, or "Jesus," that is, Yah Hosea, the god-like Saviour.

Such is the perfect man, such is the ideal of humanity.

This ideal man exists but in our thoughts, he never walked this earth, and never will. If Christ be supposed to approach nearer to the ideal than Socrates or Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus, the reason is obvious. Christ is not strictly a historic character. The imagination has had free play. The events of his life are half-hidden in bright clouds of fancy. A shining mantle is thrown round the hero which raises him above the rank of mortals. Some people wish to reach the facts which underlie this fiction of the mind. Leave this to theologians! The ideal is more important than the facts on which it rests, as the statue than its pedestal. Woe to the man who thrusts out the ideal from his life, and thinks to establish his faith by the sifting of historical evidence!

## CHAPTER IX

### HERO-WORSHIP

"Great men are the fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind: they stand as everlasting witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be; the revealed embodied possibilities of human nature."—CARLYLE.

"A saint [or hero] is one who is ever more and more severe with himself in devotion to an Ideal, more and more indifferent to everything else but its realisation."—A. L. LILLEY.

THE solar hero is beneficent to the righteous only; he bears good-will to those only who have good-will (Luke ii. 14, another reading).

His power is great, and is two-fold: for the ancients clothed their heroes with many of the attributes of Deity.

First, as love is an attribute of God Himself (1 John iv. 8), and as the sun, which is the symbol of God, warms and brings to life, so the solar hero is beneficent: he heals the sick in spirit, he raises the spiritually dead, that is to say, he rouses the consciences of those whose souls are dead. Viewed in this light, God is represented by Apollo Païon, the Healer, or by Vishnu, the Preserver.

Thus Christ, as the legend runs, brings Lazarus to life out of friendship for Mary and Martha (John xi.), and Heracles rescues from the power of Pluto the devoted wife of his friend Admetos. Secondly, as the sun scorches and kills, so the solar hero strikes and destroys; and his weapon never fails to slay (Isaiah xliii. 13). This unerring weapon is the hammer of Thor, the arrow of Paris, of Tell, etc.

The destroying power of the solar hero is felt only by the evil and by those who resist the right, and it is attributed to the heroes of antiquity, because it resides in the Deity, who is to all evil "a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). Shaddai, the destroyer, is one of the Hebrew names of God: Siva, the Destroyer, was the counterpart of Vishnu.

"A God all mercy is a God unjust."—YOUNG.

In like manner the solar hero—who is, as all should be in their degree, an "imitator of God"

(Eph. v. 1)—must wield this power as far as in him lies. It is just as much the duty of a good man to attack evil as to sustain the right.

In Matt. xxi. 19, the barren fig-tree is blasted with a word. On one other occasion only was this destroying power attributed to Christ; but we are warned not to incur "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16), and we are clearly given to understand that he who is "mighty to save" the righteous (Isaiah lxiii. 1), is also mighty to punish and to destroy the evil and impenitent.

This double aspect of Deity was known to the Greeks, and is well seen in Apollo and in Artemis. We commend these teachings of the ancients to those who would push to an extreme the doctrine of non-resistance. Idealism bids us endure personal wrong rather than resent it and become involved in strife. But when the wrong is done to the weak or to those dependent on us, then non-resistance is but another word for selfishness and baseness. Cromwell resisted political and religious despotism, and he did well, because he fought not merely to gain some interest of his own but to save his fellow-citizens from slavery. He was a destroyer of evil, and therefore, a fellow-worker with God. There are crises in the history of each race when that race must either produce a Cromwell or perish.

The Persians even went so far as to imagine a dual government of the world. Their good deity Ormuzd, the "powerful and beneficent,"



was opposed to Ahriman, who strove against him, as the giants and Titans against Zeus, and Milton's fallen angels against Jehovah. I have shown in the chapter on devils and demons that evil is merely negative. Therefore, the Persian Ahriman, like the Hebrew Satan and the Christian devil, can have no objective existence.

In what way does a hero save mankind? He saves society by breaking down the falsehoods which destroy society; he saves the individual by setting before him an ideal. But it is God alone who saves: "beside the Deity there is no saviour" (Isaiah xliii. 11).

The greatest of Hebrew prophets protests with startling earnestness against the idolatrous worship of a mortal, and the blasphemy of looking to any but God for salvation and redemption. Again and again He reiterates His solemn warning. "I the Lord am thy Saviour and Redeemer, beside Me there is no God, no Saviour, no Redeemer, yea, I know not any. I will not give My glory to another." From the 50th chapter onward, verse after verse, page after page he continues in the same strain. Yet in the very teeth of these texts Christianity has deserted the grand Hebrew monotheism, and has set up a human god, an earthly saviour and redeemer. Truly God has permitted "a strong delusion" (2 Thess. ii. 11) to fall upon mankind!

Christ is said to "redeem" or "buy back" the world, because by his example he raises men

from a lower to a higher life. Sin is a kind of slavery from which we require to be, as it were, "ransomed" or "redeemed." "Redemption is taking men out of the life of falsehood into the life of truth and fact."<sup>1</sup>

In this sense every man is, in his degree, a saviour and redeemer who resists an abuse, who protests against an error, or who sets an example of devotion. Hence the saying, "Omnes homines Christos."

We have each and all of us need of salvation. The man who does not feel this has no knowledge of religion, and nothing spiritual in his nature. As the Greeks, at Cunaxa, when facing fearful odds, invoked "Zeus the Saviour," the highest power they knew of, so ought we to raise our "Hosanna" or "save Lord" to no human lord or master, but to the great God who is Overlord of all.

Shall we worship the heroes of antiquity? "See thou do it not, for they are thy fellow-servants" (Rev. xix. 10), but rather strive to follow their example. Not all who call Christ or Buddha "Lord" shall enter into the "Kingdom of Heaven," but those who obey God's laws (Matt. vii. 21).

Hearken to the protest of the hero whom you deify. "I myself also am a mortal man" (Wisdom, vii. 1). "We revere the great teachers of the past, but we do not worship them, for they

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, "Baptism."

were human like ourselves, and as divine as they were we could and should be." Like Tell, we will bow down before the king, but not before his delegate. Whoever is honoured with incense due to God, him we will call "Nehushtan" (2 Kings xviii. 4).

In this eloquent passage of his "Vie de Jésus," Renan explains the sentiment which led to the apotheosis or deification of Christ :

"Rest now in thy glory, noble reformer. Thy work is completed, the right is earned to rank with the divinest of humanity. Henceforth, removed above all mortal weakness, dwelling in the peace of heaven, thou wilt witness the far-reaching consequences of thy noble deeds.

"Thou hast purchased a glorious immortality at the cost of a short spell of suffering, which had no power to turn thy great soul from its lofty purpose. Generations to come will own thy name, and date their years from thy nativity.

"Mighty champion, bearing high the banner of truth, thou shalt be claimed as leader by each warring sect. More loving and more loved a thousand times than thou wast in thy earthly pilgrimage, thou art destined to become the corner-stone of the temple of humanity. To dishonour thy name would shake the foundations of society. Posterity in its blind devotion will confound thee with the Deity. Since thou hast triumphed over the fear of death, take possession of the heavenly kingdom, whither generations of admiring mortals shall follow thee, toiling along the path which thou hast traced."

Again, in his last chapter, the same writer sums up in a masterly manner the character of Christ as he is depicted in the Gospels :

“The great mass of humanity is sunk in sloth and egotism. Yet in this dead level there are pillars rising to the sky, and pointing mankind to a higher destiny.

“On one of these loftiest columns the name of Jesus is inscribed. In him are summed up many of our best and noblest qualities. He was not sinless, but he overcame those same passions which we fight against, and which we too may overcome.

“The angel from heaven which comforted him was none other than his approving conscience : the fiends which tempted him are those passions which haunt the heart of every mortal.

“It is probable that many of his highest thoughts are lost to us by reason of the limited intelligence of his disciples, and it is not unlikely that their devoted affection led them to conceal many of his faults. Yet, making every allowance for our imperfect and partial records of his career, we are constrained to admit that few men ever to such an extent subordinated their private interests and inclinations to the welfare of humanity. So complete was his devotion to his lofty ideal, that towards the end of life all earthly advantages had become indifferent to him. By this heroic effort of the will he raised his soul from earth to heaven. Neither the ties of family affection, nor the pleasures of life, nor any worldly care, had power

to drag him down. He lived but to obey his heavenly Father, and to fulfil the sacred mission which devolved upon him." (The French is freely rendered in this translation.)

"Hero worship (that is, reverence for noble characters) is a primal universal instinct of the heart. If we find a man nobler and wiser than ourselves, it is almost our instinct to prostrate our affections before that man" (Robertson).

The lower races of man, who are naturally incapable of abstract ideas, and men of degraded lives, who shrink from all serious thought, hesitate to address themselves directly to the Deity (Exod. xx. 19). Some great saint or hero is deified, and placed as mediator between God and man. Thus the ancient Chaldæan prayed to Meridug, who interceded for him with his father Ea. As Meridug was called in the poetic language of the East the "only son" of Ea, so Jesus became, many generations later, the "only son" of Javeh, and intercedes in like manner for the devout Christian.

This is the first step towards polytheism, and is a sign of approaching decadence and corruption. But the downward process does not stop here. The "only son," the mediator and intercessor, is soon himself too holy to be approached, and before long another subordinate God is set up to intercede with him. Last of all, the priest steps in between man and God. Thus the

lowest stage is reached: God has become "a God afar off" (Jer. xxiii. 23).

Listen to the wise counsel of Lammenais: "Distrust men who place themselves between you and the Deity."

Herein lies the danger of an exaggerated hero-worship: that it lapses into idolatry, and paves the way for that superstition which "exalts the priest into the place of God, and so commits treason against the majesty of heaven" (Maurice). When man would place a mediator between us and the Deity, let us answer in the words of M. Loyson (Père Hyacinthe), "Dieu seul suffit!"

As his youth is pure, his manhood powerful, so his end is peace (Psalm xxxvii. 37). His death is like a bright and glorious sunset. Thus Christ is transfigured, and rises to heaven, and clouds receive him from the sight of man (Acts. i. 9). Heracles, in like manner, "becomes resplendent and ascends on flames to the sky" (Class. Dict.). Elijah mounts his chariot of fire (2 Kings ii. 11). Odysseus is transformed when he reaches his home in the West; the suitors are dead, the ground is crimson with their blood; evil is vanquished, and the strife is at an end, "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 54).

Thus may we live that we may die the death of the righteous, and that our end may be like his, peaceful and triumphant! (Num. xxiii. 10).

"Death is the veil which those who live call life,  
They sleep, and it is lifted."—SHELLEY, *Prom.*

So the poet Young :

“Nothing is dead, nay, nothing sleeps ; each soul  
That ever animated human clay  
Now wakes, is on the wing.”

“*Nihil interit. Mors janua Vitae.*”

The year is divided by Equinoxes into two periods of six months : the summer of life and light, and health and gladness : the winter of darkness and evil and death. The gloomy season of the year is presided over by the serpent, the “prince of darkness,” evil, and decay. His reign commences at the autumn Equinox, that is, at Michaelmas, 23rd September. It was natural, inevitable, that this date should be fixed as the time when we think of the departed. The decay of Nature, the falling leaf, the shortening day, all things remind us of times that cannot come again, of friends no longer with us.

As the great cycle of the year rolls by, each season brings its lesson of sadness or of joy. Christmas answers to Midsummer, and Easter to Michaelmas. Christmas is the season of hope, Midsummer of gratitude, Easter is a time of triumph, Michaelmas of sadness.

We cannot hope to improve upon this ancient and universal calendar, which Nature herself has dictated to mankind. For Nature is the outward revelation of God, and what He does cannot be mended by man. But we may, and we ought to, bring these primitive customs back to their

original intention when they lose their meaning by the lapse of time.

At the solemn festival of "All Souls Day" or "le Jour des Morts," which falls (or should fall) at Michaelmas, we deck the tombs of our departed relatives and friends, and tell our children the story of their ancestors. We who believe in a future life do not sorrow "as those who have no hope" (1 Thess. iv. 13), but we do and must lament. "The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER X

### RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY

"Man has forever."—BROWNING.

"That Life which ends at all is far too brief for me."—R. BUCHANAN, in "Justinian."

"That the majestic sum of human knowledge, the splendour and heroism of human character, have been slowly and painfully evolved, to revert at length to the abyss of annihilation, is to me positively unthinkable."—WASHINGTON SULLIVAN.

"Believe thou, O my soul,  
Life is a vision shadowy of Truth ;  
And vice and anguish and the wormy grave  
Shapes of a dream. The veiling clouds retire,  
And lo ! the throne of the redeeming God  
Wraps in one light earth, heaven and deepest hell."

—COLERIDGE, *Religious Musings*.

I STATED my conviction at the outset that the deepest truths are to be learnt from the poet

<sup>1</sup> Irving, "Sketch Book."



rather than from the philosopher. This applies with much emphasis to the doctrine of Immortality. While the theologian, to serve his own ends, treats the Resurrection as a dogma, the poet regards it as a *hope*. And nowhere is this hope better expressed than in Schiller's beautiful poem *Hoffnung* (hope) which is given at the end of this chapter. Young also<sup>1</sup> looks on this divine hope as something instinctive, intuitive, importunate. He says :

"Man's Immortality alone can solve  
The darkest of enigmas, *human hope*,  
Of all the darkest if at death we die."

And what other solution can be found for that mysterious problem which forms the subject-matter of the book of Job? In what other way can the sufferings of a righteous man, and the prosperity of the mean and selfish be reconciled with justice?

If there be no immortality, there is no justice: if no justice, then no Deity and no hope, for a Deity must be just. Idealism is then a lost cause, and pessimism the only possible philosophy. Infanticide is no longer a crime, but a kindness, and suicide the natural refuge of all those whose courage does not fail them.

We understand by immortality no vague shadowy state without remembrance of the past, or recognition of our former friends.

<sup>1</sup> *Night Thoughts*, vii.

As Christ "rose again from death, and sits on the right hand of God," so Heracles is received on Olympus. Romulus and many other heroes are thus translated. It is childish and futile to enquire into the truth of these tales; they are a beautiful allegory (Gal. iv. 24), and their meaning is that immortality is the reward, or rather the result, of idealism. That is to say, death has no power over the good and true (1 John xiii. 14). The real death is the death of the soul; from this the righteous are exempt, being, as it were, "born a second time" (John iii. 3; 1 Peter i. 23); for them "death has no sting, and the grave no terror" (1 Cor. xv. 55). "The things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18), that is to say, the abstract and the ideal alter not, fade not, and pass not away.

Those, therefore, who hold fast to idealism "pass from death unto life" (1 John iii. 14), for they are anchored to that which is alone unchangeable and eternal. **"To be allied unto Wisdom is immortality."**<sup>1</sup>

They alone are partakers of "salvation," are saved, that is, from the "damnation" or destruction which awaits all that is false and worthless. They alone are "atoned," that is, "at one" with the Spirit of the Universe, with God, and are sustained by the infinite forces of Nature.

The doctrine of a future life was known to the pre-Keltic (non-Aryan) races of western

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom viii. 17; and see Wisdom ii. 23.

Europe. The Druids taught that "the same soul animates us in another world. Death is the commencement of a longer life."<sup>1</sup> And the hope was common to most of the higher races of mankind.

"The worship of Osiris, ransomed from the dead, impressed this divine doctrine on the old Egyptian mind, and the yearly Easter of alternate grief and joy for the death and resurrection of Adonis, may have served the same high purpose for the Sidonians."<sup>2</sup>

Even among savages the same ideas prevailed, for "there is among the North American tribes a ruling agreement concerning a future state of existence." The feeling, in fact, is universal. Who has not said with the poet Young :

"An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave :  
Legions of angels can't confine me there."

Shall we reject a hope which is the common heritage of humanity, and which is strongest in those who live in closest communion with Nature? "Thinkest thou it were impossible, unimaginable," says Carlyle, "glance into the eternal, believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of man's soul." "In the end God will compensate and finish."<sup>3</sup> "Worlds may freeze, and suns may perish, but I believe that there stirs something within us that can never die."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lucan i. 450.

<sup>2</sup> D. Campbell, "Gospel of the World's Divine Order."

<sup>3</sup> Browning, *Andrea*.

<sup>4</sup> "The Discovery of the Future," by H. G. Wells, B.Sc.

It is true that the sacred writings of the Israelites (that is, the Old Testament) contain no distinct assurance on which a Jew might ground his hope of a future life, but "the sweet and simple words of Hebrew piety are in perfect harmony with that hope" (D. Campbell). If the idealist have no hope beyond this life, he is "of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19), for his idealism makes him a prey to his neighbours (Isaiah lix. 15), whereas the materialist has prosperity as his reward (Matt. vi. 2). "It is impossible," says Addison, on "Cheerfulness," "for anyone to enjoy his present existence who is apprehensive of annihilation"; and again in his well-known lines :

"It must be so : Plato, thou reasonest well ;  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality ?  
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror  
Of falling into nought ? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on itself, and startles at destruction ?  
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us ;  
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,  
And intimates eternity to man."

Well may Paul ask (1 Cor. xv. 32) to what end do the sufferings and the discipline of this life tend, and why should we endure them, if death be to us the end of all things. We should indeed be driven to say with Sardanapalus, "Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself : all else is vanity" ; or, with the gross materialist, Solomon, "Be not righteous

overmuch, why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" (Eccl. vii. 16).

"If this be all, if earth a final scene,  
Take heed, stand fast, be sure to be a knave.  
A knave in grain, ne'er deviate into right!  
Should'st thou be good, how infinite the loss;  
Guilt only makes annihilation gain."—YOUNG.

"After all, what is at the root of this belief in annihilation? It is that theology has been for some years presenting to us an idea of God wholly inadequate to our present intellectual and moral conceptions, and an idea of man which we now reject as ignoble, and as untrue, because ignoble. An adequate idea of God, a noble idea of man: these are the elements which, re-introduced into religion, will bring back the belief in immortality."<sup>1</sup>

Plato held the crude and primitive theory probably derived from Egypt, that the soul is naturally immortal. But the doctrine of Chrysippus and the Stoics is that immortality results from the active apprehension of idealism. Epictetus regarded the future life as something to be attained by the severest self-discipline in this present state. And this doctrine of conditional immortality, as it is called, was also that of Irenaeus and the earliest Christians. In that grotesque style which is peculiar to him the theistic poet Browning states this doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke, "Christ in Modern Life."

conditional immortality : "The soul doubtless is immortal, *where a soul can be discovered*," that is to say, where the higher nature has not been destroyed by sin and selfishness. Idealism links the soul to Deity and life, and thus saves it from destruction : in the ark of idealism we are raised above the waters of death.

Easter is the festival or feast of the Resurrection. This occurs in spring-time, when the trees are bursting into leaf, and vegetation is reviving, "when the flowers appear on the earth, and the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in the land" (Solomon's Song, ii. 12). For the renewal of Nature after her winter sleep is symbolic of the new life which we hope for after the sleep of death. "Sorrows are past, and in the end appears the treasure of immortality" (2 Esdras viii. 54).

The vernal Equinox was called in the East the "transit" or "time of passing," when the six sad months were past, and the six glad ones began. At Easter, that is, at this same period of the year, the Hebrews "passed" from the dark slavery of Egypt to the light of liberty. This was the historical fact commemorated at their "Passover." But on 20th March, that is, at the Equinox or Easter, the sun enters the sign of the sheep, ram, or lamb, as any one may see by looking at the Zodiac. Hence the "paschal lamb" of the Hebrews. And Christ, being a solar hero, is called the "lamb," because the sun in this

constellation triumphs over the powers of darkness and winter, and brings in the joyful season of summer. As we celebrate at Christmas the birth of the solar hero, so Easter marks his victory over darkness, and evil and death. It is impossible for me here to give even a small part of the evidence, but every one who takes the trouble to look into the question will see that the festival of Easter, like all else that pertains to Christianity, is common to the different religions of the East, and by no means special to any one of them. These institutions are to be regarded as divine, not for the absurd reasons usually given, but because they are founded on Nature, which is divine. For when we say that something is divine, what else do we mean than this, that it is founded on Nature, and therefore agreeable to the laws of God.

To make this important point more clear, I give a short passage from "The Pentateuch," one of the valuable books published by Thomas Scott :

"The festival called 'Pesach' by the Jews is a much older institution than the notice of it which we have in the book Exodus. Its Hebrew name is exactly rendered by the English word 'transit,' and the transit celebrated was primarily that of the sun over the equator at the epoch of the vernal Equinox ; a season of rejoicing that may be said to be universal among all the

policed peoples of antiquity, and which is still observed with fresh accessories and under a new name in the world of to-day.

“For the Easter of the present age is in reality no other than the Pascha, Neomenia, and Hilaria of the old world, a tribute Deo Soli Invicto.

“Mounting from the inferior or wintry signs, triumphant as it were over darkness and death, the sun then appears to bring back light and life to the world.

“And to the God he symbolised, men offered in gratitude in the spring of the year the first-fruits of the field and the firstlings of the flocks and herds.”

The reader will notice that no attempt has been made in this chapter to reason consecutively about the future life. I have cited the opinions of the Great and Good, and I have tried to show that the immortality of the righteous is part and parcel of Idealism. Without this hope the whole fabric of Idealism falls to the ground. This is enough for us; but for the materialist it is nothing. Shall we leave our higher ground of intuition, and appeal to logic in the vain hope of converting the materialist to a view of life which is alien to his nature and meaningless to his mind? Professor Newman, the theist, failed to establish this doctrine by logic. Will you attempt what this great scholar could not do? Read through the list of the books



which he wrote, and compare your intellect with his.

Priestly patronage has discredited this doctrine in the eyes of honest men. But let us take heart, for we stand with a glorious company: Epictetus and Socrates, Carlyle and Victor Hugo, with a thousand others whom superstition has not touched.

Symbols of the resurrection are the butterfly (imago), the phoenix, the lotus flower, and others. Why was the nelumbium of the Nile chosen as an emblem of immortality? Perhaps not merely on account of its beauty. The allied water-lilies (nymphaea) of our own country depress their fruits below the surface of the water and raise them again when ripe. Possibly this may be the explanation, especially as standing water was to many ancient races one of the symbols of death.

The history of the doctrine of immortality is sketched by Theodore Parker in his "Discourse," chap. vi.

Schiller's *Hope*, from a book of translations by G. C. Swayne :

"Of brighter and happier future days,  
Humanity dreams and prattles,  
To gain some prize of golden blaze,  
See how it races and battles!  
The world grows aged and young again,  
Yet hope of better things cleaves to man.

"'Tis hope that unbars the door of life,  
 Over childhood's head she hovers ;  
 The youth's wild heart with her magic is rife,  
 In his grave the grey father she covers.  
 For he wearily closes his course in the grave,  
 Yet bids on it hope still queenly wave.

"Ah, 'tis not the brainless fool's vain song,  
 A phantasy fond and fleeting ;  
 In our hearts the echo is loud and long,  
 We are born for a better being.  
 And the thing that clings to the heart so fast  
 Will not cheat the soul, so she hopes to the last."

*Parting*, by James Montgomery :

"Friend after friend departs ;  
 Who hath not lost a friend ?  
 There is no union here of hearts  
 That finds not here an end :  
*Were this frail world our only rest,*  
*Living or dying none were blest.*  
     Beyond the flight of time,  
     Beyond this vale of death,  
     There surely is some blessèd clime  
     Where life is not a breath,  
 Nor life's affections transient fire  
 Whose sparks fly upward and expire.

"Thus star by star declines,  
 Till all are passed away,  
 As morning high and higher shines  
 To pure and perfect day ;  
 Nor sink those stars in empty night,  
 They lose themselves in heaven's own light."

## CHAPTER XI

## MIRACLE, PROPHECY, AND INSPIRATION

*Miracula stultis !*

"O God deliver us from superstition which dishonours Thee and renders our existence odious."—VOLTAIRE.

"A miracle cannot oblige us either to accept any doctrine or the divine mission of the man who works it."—ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

ALL wise and good men in ancient times were thought able to work miracles. Romanists suppose, even in this twentieth century, that the bones of holy men, "relics of the saints," as they call them, have a marvellous power.

But we know by experience that no magic or miracle ever takes place in the presence of educated and enlightened people. When the newly-married invalid in "Don Quixote" begins to caper about, the bystanders, "more simple than curious," cry out, "A miracle! a miracle!" but those who were in the secret said: "No miracle, but sheer industry!" There is a good deal of "industry" about our modern miracles, and, as regards the ancient ones, there can be no doubt that the people who testified to them were "more simple than curious."

The Jews were, at the time of Christ, so ignorant and superstitious, that a Roman saying ran, "credulous as a Jew" (*credat Judæus*—a Jew may believe that). "And to this day,"

says Kinglake ("Eothen"), "the efficacy of magic is undisputed in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt; there is no controversy about the matter." Even in Europe the belief in miracles still lingers in the more backward and uneducated parts of Romanist countries.

Both before and after the time of Christ a mass of miracle and legend has gathered round the names of saints and heroes. King Arthur of Britain strove with dragons; while Ignatius Loyola, Dunstan, and other holy men had daily encounters with demons and bogies.

The belief in thaumaturgy was universal. Christ himself believed that any one could work a wonder, if not by God's help, at any rate by that of the devil, as is evident from Matt. xii. 27. "No great event of history has happened without giving rise to a cycle of fables," says Renan.

There was in the world's childhood a strong appetite for the marvellous. Wordsworth says (*Prelude*): "This craving must have its food." But sooner or later there comes a day for the individual, as for the race, when the delightful time of growing youth—

"is past,—

When craving for the marvellous gives way  
To strengthening love for things that we have seen;  
When sober truth and steady sympathies  
Take firmer hold of us."

"The reign of wonder is perennial, indestructible in man";<sup>1</sup> nor has the longing for

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, "Sartor."

miracles disappeared, for miracles are a reaction against materialism, as surely as atheism is a reaction against dogma. "A wicked and adulterous generation will always seek after signs" (Matt. xii. 39). The supernatural is no longer within them, they must seek it without; this is the meaning of the text. Hence table-turning, spirit-rapping, and the rest.

Dr Abbott ("Onesimus") says :

"So eagerly do the multitude seek after portents that they will oftentimes refuse to pay homage even to the truth, unless it come accompanied with marvels."

Thus, in modern times, those persons who wish to pose as prophets almost invariably lay claim to supernatural powers.

Those who see no marvel in the opening bud, or in the ripening corn, will ever crave for miracles and magic, for darkened rooms and morbid manifestations.

It is natural for man to seek some point of contact with the Deity. If this be not found in music or ideal art, or in the pursuit of science for its own sake, and above all in the apocalyptic visions of the poet, for "poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history," then the soul will fall back on sensational tales and the cheap marvels which the priest provides.

As true religion is associated with enlightenment and progress, so the supernatural is the

constant mark of superstition. "The worship of the supernatural must legitimately end in atheism,"<sup>1</sup> for it begins in superstition, which is the parent of atheism. In his sermon on the healing of Jairus' daughter, this same writer attempts the only possible defence of miracles. We listen with respect to so good a man, but we are compelled to differ from him on this question, and to appeal to his own words just quoted from the "Advent Lecture."

Rational thinkers do not, of course, accept the Gospel miracles as historical; but it may be worth while to point out that the more intelligent among the unreasoning multitude are of the same opinion. Some who pass as orthodox are not ashamed to stultify their own creed by repudiating the supernatural. Thus Archdeacon Wilson, headmaster of Clifton, explains that in the early stages of intellectual development natural phenomena present themselves as supernatural, but "the sphere of the supernatural is steadily narrowed as years go on and as forms of thought change." Dr Abbott, another of our clerical headmasters, quoted above, shows most conclusively that the supernatural is no essential part of Religion. The Gospel miracles, he says, have a threefold origin: firstly, they are due to the misconstruing of Eastern allegory, to interpreting figures of speech according to the letter: secondly, miracles were brought in to provide

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, "Advent Lecture."

fulfilment for imaginary prophecies ; in the third place, marvels and portents were introduced from a mistaken desire to exalt the founder of the new Religion to the level of the wonder-working prophets of an earlier time.

The New Testament miracles will always puzzle unimaginative people. Christ's first recorded wonder is an instance. It is dealt with in the following grotesque manner by Haweis in his "Picture of Jesus." Christ smuggles a quantity of wine on to the premises, then when the guests have well drunk, and are consequently "less observant than usual," he transfers this wine "quickly and quietly" to some water-pots ! The rank vulgarity of this explanation is worthy of Scarron. Better the simple credulity of our childhood. How low a standard of honour have these theologians when even the god whom they worship is a trickster like Harris and Blavatsky !

A very slight acquaintance with comparative mythology makes it clear that Christ is here represented as playing the part of Dionusos (confer Javeh-nissi), the bright god of power and plenty, worshipped in the East under various names. Beneath the fiery glance of the sun-god the watery vine sap changes to the ruddy juice of the grape. "*Lympha pudica deum vidit et erubuit*" (Crashaw). In one of the temples of Dionusos three pots of water were turned into wine each year on a certain date. This

marvel is much older than the Christian legend.

The miracle at Cana marks the moment when the solar hero enters on the period of his power. The pure and lovely dawn, the fresh and pleasant twilight of the morning hours is past. Mary, the virgin mother, must be left: "Lady, what have I to do with thee!" Half proud of her bright and glorious son, and half in awe of him, she shrinks away, silent and sad. So Paris and Oenone part; so all the solar heroes forsake their early love, so all men leave their early innocence behind.

But there is a second twilight in the life of man, another period of peace and purity, when the holy thoughts of early life are once more welcome to the soul. As the evening draws on, the calm that we had lost returns. "Youth and its powers return to the true heart, however troubled it has been."<sup>1</sup>

So Oenone is re-united to Paris ere he yields his spirit; and Mary, though dismissed at Cana, weeps below the cross. There, too, stands John, the beloved one, ready, like Philoctetes, to perform the last behests of the departing hero.

If we wish to understand the miracles attributed to Christ or to Heracles, we must refuse all explanations which mar their beauty and vulgarise their poetry, and we must enter into the spirit of these ancient allegories.

<sup>1</sup> Stopford Brooke, "Theology in the English Poets."



Above all, we must not stultify the Bible legends by isolating them from those of the other religions of antiquity. "We have torn Christianity away from the sacred context of the history of the world."<sup>1</sup>

A definition of the term "supernatural" will be found in Professor Momerie's "Basis of Religion."

After all, the question of miracles in past ages is one of little or no importance. What may have happened in Galilee eighteen hundred years ago is of no possible consequence to us. But there *is* a miracle which concerns each man closely—a greater wonder than those worked in Palestine—and that is the freeing of the human heart from sin and selfishness.

The ancients thought that God gives to good men certain indications of events to come, and they imagined that by observing the flight of birds, and in other ways, it is possible to obtain omens of success or failure in an enterprise. The Roman augurs "divined" in this way, and both the word "augur" and "auspice" contain the root of *avis*, a bird. The astrologers of Chaldæa professed to forecast the future by observing the constellations and the motions of the planets.

The gipsy tells fortunes by chiromancy or palmistry; and there are many other forms of divination.

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, "Science of Religion."

Dreams were thought to be messages from God (Gen. xl. and xli; Matt. ii. 13; Acts xvi. 19). So also in Homer the dream is divine, "theios oneiros," it comes from Zeus, "onark Dios estin." And the drawing of a lot was supposed to be overruled by Providence (Prov. xvi. 33; Jonah i. 7, etc.).

The power of foretelling the future was claimed by the priests of Delphi in Greece, and of other temples called oracles. Rising to a state of excitement bordering on frenzy, they gave their answers, thinking, as did also their hearers, that men in this condition are under the influence of some god (compare *mantis* and *mainomai*). To speak or preach in this way is called "prophesying" in the New Testament. Thus the early Christians "prophesied" when the fiery enthusiasm of Pentecost was upon them, and some of those who heard them said, "These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13).

It is certain that God does not reveal the future, even to the holiest of men. Nevertheless, in all these ideas there is a germ of truth; for the ancients, though unacquainted with spectrum analysis or the calculus, were as well able as we are to estimate their relation to God and to Humanity. The opinions of antiquity are to be considered, not so much as errors, but rather as dim and imperfect views of truth: "Omnibus veris falsa quaedam

adjuncta sunt" ["Some falsehood is admixed with every truth"].

The ancients felt and recognised that men of great heart and intellect who "walk with God," and, like Enoch, are "initiated" into the mysteries of Religion, obtained an insight which appears to the world to be miraculous. This "walk with God," these communings with the nymph Egeria, these *commercium coeli*, fit the prophet for his task, which is not indeed to unveil the future, but to proclaim at his risk unwelcome truths; for new truths are ever unwelcome, "veritas odium parit."<sup>1</sup>

A prophet is simply an earnest and enlightened man, a "seer" who *sees* things as they are; and it is natural that the same clear sight should enable him also to *foresee*, for "coming events cast their shadows before." Thus, Daniel alone was able to decipher the writing on the wall (Dan. v. 17), and Micaiah alone of the four hundred prophets (1 Kings xxii.) had the courage to tell the two kings that pride and aggression go before destruction (Prov. xiv. 18). And when dark days come upon the world, and the fire of faith burns low, the eyes of the prophet are the first to catch the glimmer of the coming dawn. Like Simeon (Luke ii. 25), he knows the infant Christ, whom others think an ordinary child. Like Elijah he hears the still, small voice which whispers in the solitude

<sup>1</sup> Terence, *Andria*.

(1 Kings xix. 12). He dreams, like John, in Patmos, of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. xxi. 1), and these dreams find an echo in the heart of humanity.

"The prophet," says Emerson, "exercises the highest functions of human nature. He raises himself from private considerations, and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eyes, he is the world's heart; he is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism; and whatever new verdict reason from her inviolable seat pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day this he shall declare."

Writing in the same spirit, Matthew Arnold says of the Hebrew prophets that—

"Their unique grandeur consists, not in the foretelling and details; but in the unerring vision with which they saw, and the unflinching boldness and sublime force with which they said that nothing based upon unrighteousness can stand."

The true prophet is what the Pope of Rome claims to be—the representative or "vicar of God" upon earth; he is "Emmanuel" or "God with us." This title is in no way peculiar to Christ; it belongs to every champion of right, to all who are "valiant for the truth upon earth" (Jer. ix. 3).

By inspiration, we mean that high and holy

thoughts are suggested or breathed into (*inspiro*) us by God; in other words, that such thoughts arise from the higher part of our nature, which is an emanation from God; and which is in contact with Him, as our bodies are in contact with the earth. All books containing such thoughts may be called "inspired," whether written in ancient days or by ourselves. The Rev H. R. Haweis ("Winged Words") thus defines inspiration, and we may accept his definition without reserve: "Inspiration is a level of moral teaching and spiritual truth above the average of the age."

The highest inspiration comes only to the highest intellects, to men of fervent and commanding genius, or, as Disraeli ("Tancred") says: "Divine Majesty has never thought fit to communicate except with human beings of the very highest powers."

The priest would have us draw a hard and fast line between inspired and uninspired books as also between "sacred" and "secular" music, and so forth. How unreasonable is this! Is there, then, no inspiration in the "Pilgrim's Progress," in the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius, or the "Manual" of Epictetus? Could the most bigoted Calvinist deny inspiration to Thomas à Kempis? Are the writings of Carlyle, Ruskin, Emerson, Theodore Parker, Tolstoy, Mazzini, and a hundred others devoid of inspiration? Who is to draw this hard and

fast line for us? It is obvious that he must be himself inspired, who could decide on the inspiration of others, and establish the "canon of Scripture," as it is called. When did inspiration cease upon this earth? At what precise moment in history did God desert this world, and leave men for ever without His divine guidance?

"Why should we isolate the work of the Spirit of God within the sphere of theology? Is inspiration confined to the things of the soul of man? Is there no divine in-breathing for man's intellect, for his imagination, for that power of his by which societies and states are built into Order and Harmony? Is the realm of knowledge, of the arts, of literature, of philosophy, of politics, of the social progress of man shut out from the spirit of God?

"There has been no folly greater than the isolation of the Spirit's work to the realm of theology. Hence arose the fatal division of the labours of the world into sacred and profane—which has excluded God from all that is called profane—and stamped with a native undivineness, business and law, literature and art, poetry and music, politics and sociology. Nothing was ever more short-sighted than this, nor anything more untrue. It has been the parent of a thousand evils in Church and State. It has isolated the Church into pride, intolerance, and tyranny wherever it has unmixedly prevailed. It has separated the State from God, and law from justice, and politics from their true basis

in morals and religion, and the work of the world from the one thing which could save it from selfishness. Again and again the progress of mankind has been made by it coincident with scepticism and irreligion, nay, with an attack on religion " (Stopford Brooke).

So Page Hopps :

"Inspiration can never have been local and exceptional, because the working of the Eternal and Omnipresent spirit can never be local and exceptional."

There is no very great savour of inspiration about a good deal of the Apocrypha, which, nevertheless, "the Church doth read for example and instruction." Have we not many a modern book from which more "example and instruction" may be derived? And if so, why do we not read them in our churches? The more we enquire into the orthodox theory of inspiration, the more absurd and irrational it seems. In the New Testament, again, we have the writings of the "fathers," the Pastor of Hermas, etc., which are supposed to be, like the Apocrypha, neither quite inspired, nor yet wholly secular; they are on the line, in fact. How are we to explain this partial inspiration? How is it that the "Epistle to the Hebrews" was rejected by one half of the early Christians, and the Revelation by the other half? Either the early Christians were very bad judges of in-

spiration, or else both these books are very doubtful. Which must we believe of these two alternatives?

Again, the Bible contains a mass of matter which men could write without the help of inspiration. Surely it did not need the finger of God to pen the Song of Solomon! The book of Ecclesiastes contains also a great deal that is not worthy of a good man, much less of the Deity; and there are many passages which, if inspired at all, are certainly inspired by Satan.

Archdeacon Farrar admits that "the old dogma of the verbal dictation of the Bible by God has become too baseless an absurdity for any well-instructed and unbiassed intelligence to maintain." But this admission does not go nearly far enough. The plain truth must sooner or later be acknowledged that these Hebrew books, like any other books, are inspired just as far as the men who wrote them were honest, earnest, and enlightened. The whole "orthodox" theory of inspiration, revelation, prophecy, and miracle is beyond any possible stretch of credulity. "Orthodoxy" must either defend itself by quibbling and Jesuitry, or boldly accept the motto, "*Credo quia absurdum.*"



## CHAPTER XII

## REVELATION, BIBLES, AND SACRED BOOKS

“Credulity is as great a sin as unbelief.”—ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

The reason is obvious: an amiable, credulous man does as much harm in the world as a scoundrel.

“What is now called the Christian Religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race.”—AUGUSTINE, Bishop of Hippo.

“The Religion of Jesus Christ was neither new nor strange” (EUSEBIUS, “Ecclesiastical History”). There were exactly as many Christians in the world 2,000 years before Christ as there are at the present moment.

WHEN a man of great earnestness and insight puts before his fellows an ideal which they are too dull or too self-interested to perceive for themselves, this is to them a revelation, or “unveiling” of hidden truth, which they must either accept to their “salvation,” or reject at their peril.

The words of every teacher of righteousness—Socrates, or Christ, or Epictetus—are to those who hear them a “gospel,” good spell, ev-angel, or good tidings (Luke ii. 10). And the written or recorded words of such a man are the “testament” or legacy which he bequeaths to mankind. A new ideal must appeal both to the emotions and to the intellect. In other words, “salvation” is a matter of both head and heart. A revelation which appeals only to

the emotions may degenerate into the hysterical excitement of the *salii* or the dancing dervishes, the corybantic frenzy of the Phrygian priests, or the grotesque performances of the "salvation army." On the other hand, a revelation which appeals solely to the reason loses itself in metaphysical subtilties, and takes no hold upon the hearts of men.

The orthodox idea of a revelation is that certain individuals in the distant past were exclusively inspired by some deity to expound to men certain complicated doctrines. This is an utterly false and mischievous view. The fact is, that just as God, the Great Spirit of the universe, gave to man the power of speech, but left him to frame language for himself,<sup>1</sup> so the Deity has bestowed upon us reason and intuition, and leaves us to answer for ourselves Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (John xviii. 38).

Shall we grant to the Hebrew writers a monopoly of inspiration, and suppose that revelation came to an abrupt end eighteen hundred years ago? This would be to thrust Religion into the past, and to cut off our communication with Heaven. It is, as Lowell says, to translate *Javeh* by "I was," instead of by "I am" (Exodus iii. 14). Either there is revelation now, or there never was any. Emerson says: "Men have come to speak of revelation as something long ago given and done, as if

<sup>1</sup> Farrar, "Origin of Language."

God spoke no longer to the heart of man." So Theodore Parker ("Discourse," ii. 7): "Men know that there is a God, and a distinction between right and wrong, by hearsay, just as they know there was a flood in the time of Noah or Deucalion."

Some think to attain to a certainty of truth by taking divers ancient books and calling them infallible. But by so doing they gain nothing and lose much, for the certainty they crave is as far away as ever. And by repudiating reason which God has given us as a guide, they lose themselves in the labyrinths of superstition.

It has often been said that an infallible book, if such an absurd thing existed, would need an infallible interpreter. Thus the Pope of Rome is perfectly logical when he proclaims himself infallible. And those Protestants who refuse to complete the Reformation by discarding the last rags of superstition, will find themselves compelled to reverse the Reformation, and accept again the authority of Rome.

The Rev. Carteret Fletcher, Rector of Carfax, Oxford, says :

"It is the boast of Protestants that they have an 'open Bible.' Well, an open Bible is a great blessing, *provided it is really open*. But it is not open, when reason and conscience are not free to verify it—not free to distinguish its inspired from its uninspired portions, its divine from its human elements. If we are required to accept it as

divinely inspired in every part then the Scriptures are not an open Bible, but a *paper-pope*, before which reason would have to quench its light, and conscience hush its voice. It is, therefore, of vital importance to maintain the supremacy of these verifying faculties, as judges of religious truth—to uphold them as supreme against not only the living Pope of Rome, but the paper-pope also of a bastard Protestantism.”

That teacher is not to be trusted who pretends to reveal anything which is not self-evident when clearly stated, and which could not be discovered by any man who is unimpeded by sensuality, selfishness, or prejudice. Epictetus took enormous trouble to rid his soul of passion and self-interest. “I work hard at it,” he said. He claimed no supernatural insight, he gave himself no pompous airs. When you read the “Manual” of Epictetus you say, “All this is obviously true: I could have known it myself if sin did not prevent me.” The highest truth is absolutely simple. All the revelation that a man can need is in your heart, provided that you do not stifle it. Root out everything that conflicts with idealism and truth will reveal itself within you.

Bibliolatry is the cardinal vice of Geneva, as sacerdotalism is that of Rome. Assuredly the latter is more dangerous and more degrading than the former. But that man is as much a slave who pins his faith to a book as the other

whose conscience is kept by a priest. And he is an idolater to boot, as Lowell says :

“ Who with his idol volume’s covers two  
Would make a jail to coop the living God ;  
Thinking the cisterns of those Hebrew brains  
Drew dry the springs of the All-knower’s thought.”

The Bible becomes to the evangelical Christian a kind of magical book, like the *grimoire* of the Middle Ages, in which he can, by a little ingenuity, find any theory and almost any fact.

The Bible is a collection of books by different authors. They are bound up together, but ought to be printed separately, as they are of very different value. The word “Bible” is simply the Greek for “book.” The part called “Old Testament” consists of a number of Hebrew books ; these contain the history, mythology, poetry, and ritual, or religious observances, of the Jewish race. These books are set down to certain authors, but the fact is that we know nothing whatever about the date or the authorship of many of them. It is quite unnecessary for me to point out here the inaccuracies and indecencies in the Old Testament. This has been done by Bishop Colenso, by Ingersholl, and by a hundred others.

The part called “New Testament,” or rather “Covenant,” consists of a number of Greek books. These contain four different versions of the life of Christ, and some of the writings of the earliest Christians. It is possible that the

first three Gospels are based on some earlier book in Hebrew or Syriac. The fourth Gospel is a sort of romance, probably written much later than the others.

These books are attributed to some friends of Christ, called "apostles," that is, men *sent out* to preach, or "disciples," that is, *pupils* or learners.

In the New Testament there is much that is true and beautiful, especially the teaching of Christ. In the Old Testament some books are of the greatest value, some, again, are of little interest. The Psalms are the highest poetry ever written; nearer to God than this the human spirit cannot rise. On the other hand, much of Solomon's writing is worthless, as we might expect, for he was a bestial man, a mere stallion, if the biblical account of his sensuality is to be taken seriously (1 Kings xi. 3), and a materialist who repeatedly denies a future state (Eccl. iii. 19; vi. 6; ix. 5 and 10), and affirms that the sum of wisdom is to eat and drink (Eccl. ii. 24; viii. 15).

The Hebrew and Greek scriptures (or writings) contain immortal sentences, which have been the bread of life to millions, but they have no epical integrity; they are fragmentary, and are not shown in their order to the intellect.

"We look for the new teacher who shall follow so far those shining laws, that he shall see them come to a full circle, shall see their rounding, complete grace, shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul, shall see the identity of the

law of gravitation with purity of heart, and shall show that the 'ought' or duty is one thing with science, with beauty, and with joy."<sup>1</sup>

Few are so dull and brutish as not to appreciate the Psalms, to be stirred by the "Sermon on the Mount," and moved by the tragedy of Calvary. But the Hebrew literature can be properly understood and appreciated by those only who read it without superstition and prejudice. Only in the light of comparative mythology can we see the full importance of the beautiful legends of Genesis, for these appear to be fragments from an earlier Chaldæan cycle.

"Although there are many gaps and not a few obscurities in this story, which is in fact but an epitome of more ancient traditions; and although it is not possible to take it literally, nevertheless it contains a sufficient number of positive data to give us a general idea of the early vicissitudes of human society."

These are the words of a thoughtful writer (Ott, "*L'Asie Occidentale*").

Again, Moses is greater when viewed as a legislator than as a mere conjurer, and the spiritual history of the "chosen people" becomes doubly instructive when we see in the Hebrews nothing more nor less than an Arab tribe raised to great power about 1000 B.C. by their love of a simple, agricultural life and their deep-

<sup>1</sup> Emerson, "Nature."

rooted regard for righteousness, then decaying, just as other nations do, when this simplicity and love of right was undermined and corrupted by wealth and prosperity.

As the Old Testament shows us the spectacle of a religion arising from the contact of the earlier Cushite with the later Semitic race, at the spot where Asia meets Africa (for the Dead Sea basin is in close geographical connection with Africa), so in the New Testament we see another religion springing from the intercourse of the Semitic Syrians with the still later Aryan Greeks. It is but natural that Palestine should have moulded the mind of humanity, for in this strange region met and mingled some of the noblest races of man.

As Jerusalem and the lower part of Palestine were closely connected with Egypt (Gen. xii. 10; Gen. xlii. ; 2 Kings xviii. 21; Matt. ii. 14), so the Greek city of Antioch at the northern extremity of Syria was, as it were, a link between Asia and Europe. Here Christianity took shape (Acts xi. 26, and xiii. 1), or, in the words of the Bible commentaries, "This city was the centre of Gentile evangelisation."

On these two great events the whole Bible history turns, and they are perhaps the most important in the intellectual development of the human race; for they are stages in the advance of idealism, illustrated and enforced by the history of the Hebrew race; and no



one can be considered educated who is not acquainted with its narrative and familiar with its teaching.

The Protestant princes at the Diet of Spire wore on their arms the letters V.D.M.I.Æ.—“*Verbum Domini manet in æternum*” (1 Pet. i. 25, and Ps. cxvii. 2). This was the watchword of the earliest reformers, and it must also be ours, but the “Word of God” is not confined within the covers of the Bible; whatever honest and earnest men have spoken or written in any language anywhere, that is for us the “Word of God.”

The Bible commences with a retrospect, and closes with a prospect. Genesis states what was known in those early days about the origin of the human race; the book of Revelation, an Eastern poem, dreams of our destiny when life is done. The one searches out the past, the other reaches forward to the future. We must look back; for the past is the prophet of the future. We must look forward, for without the future both past and present interest us no more. We crave to know both “whence” and “whither,” yet both are hidden from our sight. The problem of the future, like that of the past, is insoluble by any logical method. In the former case the mystery meets us at the outset; in the latter, it awaits us when we have penetrated through embryology and palæontology

to the primordial protoplasm. Faith alone can pierce the veil.

By all means let us listen to what science can tell us of the ages of the past; and of our slow ascent and genesis. Let us look backward and downward. But shall we not also look forward and upward? Shall we not hearken when the poet sings of a "new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13)? Deep would be the gloom were we to blot out the bright visions of Patmos, and stop our ears to all that poets tell us of brighter days to come.

The Bible of humanity must contain not only its Genesis, but also its Apocalypse.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HEAVEN AND HELL: ANGELS AND DEVILS

"Heaven has been used by the priesthood as a bribe to induce the starving, and the down-trodden to be patient with their sufferings, and submissive to injustice and tyranny."—MRS LYNN LINTON.

HEAVEN was to the ancients the snowy heights of Mount Olympus, between Thessaly and Greece; or the "*beatæ insulæ*," the happy islands in the distant West. Here was the concourse of the blessed, "*amoena piorum concilia*."

The Teutonic word "heaven" means the sky,

which is "heaved" up above us. "Hell" implied, like "hades," the "unseen," something covered or hidden. It did not originally imply a place of punishment. Tartarus was an abode of torment, the home of the furies, guarded by the three-headed Cerberus, and surrounded by the burning streams of Phlegethon.

Between these two the Romanists are taught to believe in an intermediate state, called "purgatory"—that is, the "place of cleansing"—where those not wholly bad will suffer until they have expiated their sins. This, like all our ideas about the details of the future state, is a pure speculation. We do not know, and can never know, whether it is true or false. But we do know that the priest has turned the doctrine of purgatory to his own account, for he blasphemously claims the power of freeing the souls of the departed from this place of torment, and receives large sums from his poor credulous dupes for performing this magical operation.

We need not discuss "the corrosive doctrine of an eternal hell" (F. P. Cobbe), for even the more ignorant Calvinists are beginning to take less delight in brimstone and sulphur. "Hell-fire," says Charles Voysey, "is going out for want of stirring." No man knows anything whatever about heaven or hell. But it is extremely probable that, as morality has its reward immediately, and also its penalty, so the reward,

or rather the result, of Idealism will be reaped in some future phase of existence. Otherwise, Epictetus and Christ and all those who have done most for humanity have made a fatal mistake. "For it is absurd to say that a life of self-denial and endurance, ending in martyrdom, is happiness, unless there is compensation beyond" (Goldwin Smith). When we speak of "wicked people being sent to hell" (Ps. ix. 17), we mean that crimes unpunished here will meet with retribution hereafter. As the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23), persistence in sin, or that utter indifference to everything ideal which the Bible calls "forgetting God," may possibly lead to annihilation. *Dii meliora!* For absolute badness is absolute death. Possibly men are as much unable to attain to absolute badness as to absolute goodness.

Coleridge says that "hell is but truth found out too late"; that is to say, hell is remorse for an evil or a wasted life. No fire or flames are needed. Conscience can wield the lash of the Eumenides. "Who can endure an evil conscience?" (Prov. xviii. 14, correct translation). But it avails nothing to speculate about things which we can never know. Each man has enough to do to save himself, with God's help, from the "hell" which waits on misspent time and wasted opportunities.

"Be not curious to know how the ungodly shall be punished, and when; but enquire how

the righteous shall be saved" (2 Esdras ix. 13).

The "devil" is an impersonation of evil: and as evil is negative, or the absence of good, it follows that the devil is the impersonation of nothing. In other words, there is no devil, nor can be. "The devil is the negation and opposite of God. Whereas God is 'I am' (Ex. iii. 14), or positive Being; the devil 'is not'" (Maitland). "Good is positive, evil is merely negative, not absolute; it is like cold, which is merely the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or nonentity" (Emerson).

Whenever anything is amiss within us or without, uneducated people use "the devil" as a scapegoat. Christ and his countrymen supposed that diseases were caused by devils (Matt. ix. 32; xii. 22; xvii. 18; Mark vii. 25, etc.). Mary Magdalene was afflicted with seven devils, and a whole army of devils dwelt in another unfortunate person (Mark v. 9). So if the weather or the crops go wrong, the devil must be at the bottom of it. The German farmers have a "Kartoffel-teufel," a solanaceous devil, who causes the potatoes to rot!<sup>1</sup> This demon cannot be older than the days of Raleigh and Parmentier, unless he came across the Atlantic with the tuber.

The downward tendency in human nature, "original sin," is quite enough to account for our

<sup>1</sup> Gubernatis, "Mythologie des Plantes."

own personal shortcomings, and for the crimes of humanity. Devil means "accuser"; but our own hearts accuse us quite sufficiently, so long as the conscience is not "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 2).

The belief in devils is a mark of the earliest and lowest stage of civilisation. Savages who have no God, and no word even for "good," worship one or more devils. But as Religion becomes more ideal, the devils disappear. In the Middle Ages the devil had already dwindled into a burlesque bogie, with horns and hoofs and tail, who played amusing pranks, and was very much afraid of holy water. Dunstan actually seized him by the nose or by the tail! In country districts, where the imagination has free play, and education has not yet called out the reasoning powers, the peasant sees as many bogies as Tam o' Shanter did in "Alloway's auld haunted kirk." Every wild and gloomy spot is peopled with devils, ghosts, fairies, elves, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, wraiths, apparitions, dragons, giants, and dwarfs. Many, if not all, of these are the deposed gods of ancient religions.

When a lower form of faith is superseded by a higher, its deities are transformed into demons. The new ideas take their rise in towns and in centres of mental activity. The dwellers in outlying districts, the distant villagers or "pagans," are the last to adopt the religious

innovation. As the Scotch and Irish fought with ill-placed loyalty for the worthless Stuarts, so do country folk everywhere cling to exploded ideas. Thus it happens that the gods of bygone creeds linger on as elves and fairies, or become degraded step by step, until they take their last stand at the corner of some field as a Priapus or a scarecrow. Signs are not wanting that the minor deities of Christianity will share this fate; and it is ominous that the word "Christian" has already given rise to "crétin." Those who make a virtue of credulity are, in fact, within a measurable distance of absolute imbecility.

The man who puts his trust in God need not trouble himself about devils. But the word "devil" represents a very real inward, though not an outward, danger. To different individuals and at different times of life, "the devil" takes different forms. Now he is a satyr; now the spirit of doubt and denial in Goethe's *Faust*, who drives us to despair of this world and the next. Again, he is the "father of lies" (John viii. 44), and patron of all dishonesty and Jesuitry; and anon he comes before us disguised as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14), strictly respectable and orthodox—no shaggy legs and pointed ears—urging a cowardly conformity to anything and everything established, and pointing out the dangers and disadvantages of being in a minority.

The symbol of the devil or Satan (Shaitan), or

Baal-Zebub, god of flies, is a serpent (Gen. iii.), which represents evil, wrong, and the powers of darkness. This serpent is the Egyptian typhon slain by Horus, the Greek python killed by Apollo, the hydra by Heracles, the dragon by St George (the Cappadocian brigand who was promoted to be England's patron saint), and so on. In all these legends we see the same glorious hope that humanity will at last overcome evil, or as it is poetically stated in Genesis iii. 14, the descendants of Eve shall bruise the serpent's head.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SACRIFICE, ATONEMENT, ALTRUISM

"To obey is better than sacrifice."

"L'agneau qu'on immolait à l'autel est devenu le type de l'homme parfait, aimant, miséricordieux, qui se dévoue pour ses frères, qui souffre, qui meurt pour eux."—F. DE ROUGEMONT, "Le Peuple Primitif."

THERE are three views of sacrifice, corresponding to three distinct ideas of God: first, an offering of blood to a cruel demon; secondly, a peace-offering to propitiate a God who is good and bad by turns, capricious and dangerous like an eastern despot; thirdly, self-sacrifice to the will of a beneficent Deity.

The god of the earliest races was, like that of many savages, a vindictive fiend, who delights



in blood, as do his worshippers. The legend in Genesis iv. tells us that the primitive Deity adored by these primeval men would not accept the "fruits of the ground." Like those ghosts in the *Odyssey* (Bk. xi. 36), he loved the taste of blood. There are traces of this early demon-worship in the history of most races. In Genesis xxii. we see the point in Hebrew history, where higher ideas of Deity began to prevail, and the conscience revolted against offering children to demons. Jephthah (Judges xi. 31), a low-born man, as we are informed, fell back into the barbarous custom, and burned his own daughter.

But the Hebrew poets taught the people to abhor the cruelty of the neighbouring nations, who "sacrificed their children to devils, and shed innocent blood" (Ps. cvi. 37; and see 2 Kings iii. 27). One bard was bold enough to protest against even the sacrifice of animals. Speaking in the name of his God, he utters these remarkable words, which must have been the very wildest "heresy" in those days, when the world believed in bloody sacrifices: "Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats? If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fulness thereof. I will take no bullock out of thy folds, for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Offer unto Javeh thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High" (Ps. i.).

The Romans abandoned human sacrifices at

the early period of their history which is represented by the reign of Numa. Ovid tells us how the witty king cajoled his god into eating fish and onions instead of flesh and blood. At the time of the Trojan War the Hellenes had not yet outgrown this early stage of civilisation. Iphigenia must perish before the ships can sail.

Long after the higher races had ceased to offer human sacrifices, the more barbarous peoples thought to gain the favour of their demon gods by thrusting their children into the fire. In the last Punic War the Carthagenians were guilty of this crime.

As a man's character is, so is his idea of God. A merciless man will imagine a God like himself: "Le juste ciel envoie aux âmes cruelles des religions effroyables," "Just Heaven sends cruel creeds to cruel men" (St Pierre). Seneca ("De Vita Beata") says that a low conception of the Deity causes men to sin without shame. Thus the Hebrew Javeh was at the one time vindictive and inexorable, at another time favourable, to his worshippers. We find accordingly that the Hebrews could practise revolting cruelties on their captives when not restrained by their prophets (compare 2 Kings vi. 21, and 1 Chron. xx. 3).

Many ancient nations supplied their gods with blood by offering up all strangers who fell into their hands. The Tauri of the Crimea did this, and Busiris, King of Egypt, as the legend goes. The Minotaur of Crete was probably a huge idol

which received a yearly tribute of human victims from conquered countries.

This delight in blood lingers to this day both in the character and in the religion of less refined people. The picturesque oath, "by our lady" (that is the B.V.M.), has been corrupted into the universal adjective "bloody," which often means choice or pleasant. And blood is the staple subject of the evangelical hymns. Not without reason did Coleridge speak of the "raw head and bloody bones of popular theology."

In the second stage of civilisation a peace-offering to a despot took the place of a sanguinary sacrifice to a demon. The offering was either an animal or some produce of the field. Animals, of course, were the money of ancient times (*pecus pecunia*). This idea of bribing the gods was universal. A Greek proverb says "the gods are gained over by gifts." But the gift must be of value to the giver (1 Chron. xxi. 24).

This view of sacrifice, though anthropomorphic, is far higher than the former one, for it does not necessarily involve bloodshed. The priest naturally does all he can to propagate this idea, because the offerings made to the gods are his perquisites, and form the main source of his revenue.

The third and highest view of sacrifice is based on the idea that the Deity is just and merciful, that He does not delight in blood, and

cannot be bribed, and that the way to please Him is to keep His law—

“For we are filled,  
Who live to-day, with a more perfect sense  
Of the great love of God than those of old,  
Who, groping in the dawn of knowledge, saw  
Only dark shadows of the Unknown.”

—L. MORRIS, *Epics of Hades*.

With Christianity this nobler ideal of a spiritual sacrifice (1 Pet. ii. 5), prevailed; but it was not altogether strange to the Hebrews, as we may see by such texts as these: “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (see 1 Sam. xv. 22; so Ps. li. 17; Prov. xxi. 3, etc.).

The doctrine of the “Atonement” is a strange distortion of an eternal truth. When this doctrine is put before us in its most degraded form, we have a feeling of surprise and horror. How can any man believe in and worship a fiend who slays his own son to satisfy his fury against a set of miserable mortals? This is certainly a relic of demon-worship, a survival of the earliest and lowest stage of Religion, when a bloody sacrifice was thought acceptable to God.

The more cultivated Christian writers explain away the Atonement, so as to make it less revolting. But the doctrine does not stand by itself; it depends upon the theory of sacrifice.

To each of the three views of sacrifice there is a corresponding view of the Atonement.

Firstly, the primitive God, who is a vampire, must have the blood of his own son. Christ is the "scapegoat" (Lev. xxi. 20). This is the "vicarious sacrifice" theory—a doctrine which might shock even a savage, and which is irrational as it is shocking; for suffering is not merely the punishment of sin, it is also the consequence. We can imagine a punishment being transferred from a guilty person to an innocent one, however unjust such a thing would be, but a consequence cannot be transferred. If a man eats sour grapes, his own teeth, not his neighbour's, are set on edge (Ezek. xviii. 2-4, 20-30, etc.).

Secondly, the higher gods of the nobler races are less sanguinary, yet they are more to be feared than loved; they are liable to fits of anger, and must be propitiated by costly offerings. To persons in this stage of thought, Christ is a "peace-offering" to an offended Deity.

But there is a third and still higher view of Deity, viz. :—that He is merciful, and "desires not the death of the sinner," much less that of an innocent substitute for the offending wretch. This theory teaches that God and man are not at variance, and that, consequently, no "at-one-ment" is needed, excepting repentance and amendment of life. No peace-offering or propitiation is required of us, but obedience and resignation.

Sacrifice remains, not of cattle or of chattles, but of self—the hardest sacrifice of all.

In this sense Christ and Socrates and a hundred thousand others, offered themselves as a willing sacrifice, not to appease an angry God, but to reform and raise a corrupt society.

All human progress is based on sacrifice. This is the truth which underlies the dark delusion of the Atonement. Every step of political and religious progress has been won by sacrifice. Some Winkelried has thrown himself upon the spear points that his comrades might pass through the gap. The ancients were convinced that “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” (Heb. ix. 22), and they were but attempting to express in a dim, barbarous fashion, the eternal truth, that without suffering there is no higher life. So, again, when evangelical Christians say, “Christ died for me,” they are stating an absolute truth in an imperfect and grotesque manner. John the Baptist, Christ, and Paul, the three founders of Christianity, all lived and died for humanity, and therefore for us. And it is equally true that Epictetus lived for us, that Socrates died for us, that Ridley and Latimer were burnt for us, and our own parents taught us and toiled for us. Therefore, to all these benefactors be equal honour, and for each of them be equal thanks to God.

Religion, as stated in chapter iii., is the

attempt to realise public and private ideals, the supreme ideal being the service of Humanity. This devotion to ideals, this service involves self-sacrifice, which is a painful thing. The Christian speaks of "taking up his cross"; and he is absolutely right, for every ideal is a "cross," a torture. A cross which is no burden to bear is a sham; an ideal which involves no torment is a lie.

**A religion which men do not hate is false.**

Epictetus, the master, says: "Come not to me for anything pleasant, I offer you a bitter draught."

We naturally seek to escape from the obligations of Religion. We crave for an easier and less irksome substitute, although we know that this will be the ruin of our souls. Priests and ministers pander to this accursed craving: they supply us with a pleasant substitute for Religion. They enable us to violate the essential spirit of Religion, and yet escape (for a time) the reproach of conscience. All the Christian churches, without exception, are soporifics which deaden the soul, and destroy the sense of right and wrong.

Materialistic philosophers have attempted to show that altruism, carried to excess, would result in an impracticable state of things. But this need not concern us. The world has never yet had enough of unselfishness, and is never likely to have enough; *a fortiori* we can never have too much. *In virtute non est verendum ne*

*quid nimium sit.* It is futile to reason about a state of things which can never occur. It may perhaps be strictly in accordance with what we call the "laws of Nature," though we cannot prove it, or even see it to be true, that the man who acts as is best for humanity does also what is to his own advantage. Altruism and the highest self-interest may be one and the same thing, though we know it not.

There can be but one true Religion in all times and places, for self-sacrifice is as simple as it is difficult, "the humble, meek, merciful, pious, just, devout souls are everywhere of one religion" (William Penn). But there are countless religious systems, commonly called religions.

"Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day, and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."—TENNYSON.

It is true that "our little systems have their day," for they are, and ever must be imperfect. Yet we may not dispense with them.

Neither Religion nor education can exist without a system. One structure after another may crumble away, yet our very nature compels us to construct. System we must have ; either some worn-out method of the past, some apparatus of priests, parsons, ministers, churches, Bibles, services and prayers, or one more suited to our present needs. But let us beware of those systems which remove all that is irksome



from Religion, let us avoid those guides who lead along an easy and pleasant path, those prophets who prophesy smooth things, those priests who scatter broadcast "pardons" and "indulgences." Those are false systems and dangerous, which take advantage of human weakness, and offer, instead of idealism, "services" and such-like things. We are only too prone to fall into the pleasant paths of formalism, to follow the system that is easiest. The whole history of the Jews was a series of such backslidings, and the whole burden of their noble prophets was a protest against such falling off.

It should be the chief office of Religion to hold in check that fierce spirit of rivalry which is natural to all animals, including man. The "struggle for existence" goads men to degrade themselves in a hundred ways, and to trample on each other: "*homo homini daemon.*" The cruel competition of life makes us forget, or even doubt, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Religion should seek to set at one those who strive, saying, like Moses, "Sirs, ye are brethren!" (Acts vii. 26). Like Duke Theseus in Chaucer's tale, she should persuade the combatants in the lists of life to blunt their spear points. But so far from enforcing the "*trêve de Dieu*," Religion herself has too often drawn the sword, and the bitterest wars have been those waged in the very name of Religion,

"For first among the priests dissension springs."

—*Paradise Lost*, xii. 353.

It is natural to enquire what motive can induce a man to disregard his own immediate interest and devote himself to the good of his fellows. The answer is that all the higher faculties of the soul (unless they are stifled) point in this direction. *Reason* convinces us that self-interest, "individualism," must logically end in an internecine struggle where the meanest only can survive. *Conscience* is shocked by the vileness of a selfish life, it revolts against the cruelty and the treachery to which "individualism" inevitably commits us. *Intuition*, or the sense of abstract beauty, the "beauty of holiness," attracts us to unselfishness: we all admire a generous action, simply because it is beautiful, *kalon kai agathon*; for "Sovereign beauty wins the soul at last" (R. Lowell). Finally *love*, or the sense of kinship leads us on to friendship and fraternity, for love is the lodestone of the soul. It is the very nature of love to scorn self-interest, to make easy the sacrifice of self. For love ties man through the family to race, the larger family, and to Humanity, the largest family. Love unites us with the Great and Good, the unselfish ones of all races, all periods and climes.

## CHAPTER XV

## SYMBOLISM AND MYSTERY

Symbolism for its own sake is childish ; but a symbol for that which is unseen is a necessity to many and an advantage to all.

“Take away the sublime Symbolism from our material existence, and let it stand only for what it can make good on its own account ; and what is there to redeem it from selfishness and insignificance ? The home sinks into a house, the meal into a mess, the grave into a pit ; honour and veracity are appreciated chiefly as instruments of trade, purity and temperance as necessities of health, justice as the condition of social equilibrium, mercy as the price of a quiet time.”—MARTINEAU.

MANY Protestants have an unreasoning objection to all symbolism which they confound with sacerdotalism and formalism. But there is no necessary connection between symbolism and Popery, and we should do well to reflect that, by giving the Romanist a monopoly of symbolic teaching, we are placing a sharp sword in the hands of the enemies of human progress.

It is a serious mistake to regard the Reformation as a protest against symbolic teaching. It is a mark of ignorance to identify symbolism with superstition, for symbolism may be used in the service of truth. It is against sacerdotalism and formalism that the protest of the Reformation was made. “The strength of the Puritan protest lay in the deep and true conviction that God is living and reigning, and that He has not dele-

gated His powers to any body of ministers, or shut up His grace in any ceremonies."<sup>1</sup>

Symbolism is teaching or affirming hidden truths by means of outward symbols or observances. If I take off my hat, or shake hands, these are symbolic actions expressive of respect or good-will. Kneeling, or prostrating oneself, as the Russians do, or holding up the hands as the Romans did, *duplices tendens ad sidera palmas*, and also the Hebrews (Exod. xvii. 11), this is a symbolic act. So also is uncovering the head in church, or the feet in entering a mosque. The sweet-smelling incense which the Romanists burn in their churches is a beautiful symbol of aspiration. How hopelessly irrational is that prejudice which permits music to please the ear, stained windows and noble architecture to please the eye and delight the sense of beauty, and yet refuses to recognise the sense of smell! We stultify ourselves still further by the exile of painting and sculpture from our churches.

The never-dying flame of the temple of Vesta, and those fires which flicker before the altar in the Church of Rome, serve to remind us of the flame of faith.

The clear water in the font is an emblem of purity: nor needs it any priestly consecration to make it "holy."

The sign of the cross which the pious Romanist makes in moments of pain and peril is the mark

<sup>1</sup> Maurice, "Lessons of Hope," p. 237.

of suffering humanity, and a token of submission to the Divine will. In like manner the anchor represents hope, the heart good-will, the ring in marriage (objected to by so many of the Protestant dissenters) fidelity, and so on. Everything which reminds us of ideals should be welcome to the idealist. Of course a so-called work of art may embody no ideal whatever, or a low one. In this case we have no concern with it.

Symbolism is necessary, not only for the instruction and "edification" of those whose minds are slow to apprehend abstract ideas, but even the highest intellect cannot dispense with symbolism. "Spirit may mingle with spirit, but sense requireth a symbol," says Tupper, with not inelegant alliteration, and here at any rate there is wisdom in his words. Sir T. Browne ("Rel., Med.," iii.) may be quoted to the same effect: "I love to use those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible devotion."

If then you march with the army of Progress, let the *Spiral* be your mark, unless you know some better one. If by God's grace you rise above the popular superstitions, let the ancient and universal symbol of the *Fish* be the sign of your emancipation. If you look to idealism for the safety of your soul, then take the *Ark* as your badge, unless some more appropriate symbol should be suggested. If you aim at

the higher life, and are striving towards it, let the *Cup* remind you of it, for this symbol also is ancient and universal. By the use of the same symbols, you shall recognise those persons to whom you are spiritually related. When you see a symbol which to you is sacred, be it the cross or any other, salute that symbol as a soldier does his flag.

The human spirit "searches the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10), but they tend to fade away and become dim, because we cannot fully grasp them. Even in the moments of greatest exaltation we can see only "the hem of the garment of Deity": there is no similitude (Deut. iv. 12), only

"Symbols divine,  
Manifestations of that beauteous life,  
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space."

—KEATS, *Hyperion*.

for "the Deity can be known to us only through some type or figure" (Plato). Concrete things, as Swedenborg has shown, help to direct the mind to those abstract ideas of which they are the types. We must not, however, confound the concrete with the abstract, the type with the antitype, the statue with the Deity. Nor must we make ceremonies and observances, which are merely helps to Religion, a substitute for Religion.

"If we make our Religion to depend too much

upon external observances, our devotion, that is the vital part of our Religion, will soon disappear" (Imitatio).

Symbolism may be employed in the service of superstition and falsehood, as, for instance, in the mummeries of Romanism and of Anglican ritualism, but its true function is to teach those higher truths which we see "in a glass darkly" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), and which can never be defined or expressed in exact language, for they transcend the power of words.

Christ, as was the custom in the East, taught Religion by means of parables, just as Æsop conveyed moral lessons in his fables.

The term "mystery" has often been used to express truths which are felt to be too deep for words. Thus Paul speaks of the heavenly wisdom as mysterious (1 Cor. ii. 7; and see 1 Tim. iii. 16, etc.). When a teacher wishes to explain these deep truths which cannot easily be matched by any word, he is compelled to use metaphor or figure of speech. For instance, the change of character which consists in leaving a life of wordliness behind and caring for higher things was called by the Christians of Palestine, as it had been called much earlier by the votaries of other eastern religions, "the second birth." We now say the same thing in a single word "conversion" or "reformation."

Matter of fact and unimaginative persons,

like Nicodemus, for instance (John iii. 4), are staggered by poetical and metaphorical expressions such as this. In case they are ill-disposed they scoff at it: if, on the other hand, they have a laudable desire to get some good, they take it quite literally as a man might swallow a walnut with the shell on. The greater part of our errors, superstitions, and dogmas, are due to our taking in a literal sense the figurative language of the East.

"The language of antiquity (says Max Müller) is the language of childhood: ay, and we ourselves when we attempt to reach the Infinite and the Divine by means of abstract terms, are we even now better than children trying to place a ladder against the sky? The fault rests with us if we insist on taking the lisplings of children for the words of men, if we attempt to translate literally ancient into modern language, Oriental into Occidental speech, poetry into prose. In the Bible and in the Christian religion there are many things which disclose their true meaning to those only who know something of the science of language, who have not only ears to hear, but a heart to understand the real meaning of parables."<sup>1</sup>

Dr Abbot ("Onesimus") says:

"The minds of those early writers seem ever on the poise between poetry and prose, between figures of speech and plain sense, between hyperbole and fact. Hence it has come to

<sup>1</sup> See also M. Arnold, "Literature and Dogma," chap. vi.



pass that all manner of poetic tales and legends have been interwoven and embodied in their narratives, so that it is difficult to tell where the poetry ends and where the history begins."

Clement and Origen, and the more enlightened of the early Christians, considered the legends of Genesis as allegories. Indeed, that man's reason must be in an embryonic stage who can take these miraculous stories for pure history.

Sometimes the meaning of an ancient myth escapes us: either we are too dull to read the riddle, or else the clue to it is lost. Why were Romulus, Moses, Sargon, and many other heroes drawn from the reeds of the river? We need not stay to consider the silly statement that these stories were borrowed from the Old Testament, for Sargon lived long before Moses. The Zulu also, if asked to account for his origin, says that he sprang from the reeds. The time is not lost which is spent in trying to unravel these primeval parables of Humanity. It is obvious that the horn signified strength, that the serpent in the garden was the symbol of evil, and so forth. But all ancient figures are not so easily interpreted. And until they are better understood the northern races will continue to burlesque the eastern religions which they have blindly adopted.

There is a false mysticism which seeks a hidden meaning where none is intended. For

instance, those modern Jews who believe in a future life, and are determined to find this doctrine in the canonical books of the Old Testament, are driven to interpret in a figurative way such texts as Prov. vi. 22. Again, the orthodox theologians pretend to find mysterious references to Christ in all sorts of Old Testament texts which apply equally well to any saint or hero. These they call "prophecies of the Messiah." The Evangelicals find "types of Christ" at every turn. The Theosophists push mysticism to an absurd extreme. Theosophism substitutes for practical Religion an enquiry into the meaning and the origin of myths and symbols. That energy which should be devoted to the reform of abuses and to other useful work is devoted to futile researches into the nature of the soul. Magic and imposture replace the rational study of Nature. But the uttermost folly of mystery gone mad is reached by those fanatics who found a religious system on the great pyramid of Egypt, and imagine with imbecile disregard for history and ethnology that the Anglo-Saxon is descended from the lost ten tribes of Israel!

It is important to note that the spiritual significance of a story is quite independent of its historical accuracy. For example, Egypt, Babylon, and Sodom imply the corruption, priestcraft and vices of an ancient civilisation, in a word Sin. The historian may enquire

whether the departure or Exodus of Israel from Egypt is fact or fiction: but this question has nothing whatever to do with Religion. Every hero, every man for that matter, who would set his foot upon the path, must have his Exodus. Lot may not linger in the cities of the plain, Abraham must leave Babylon, Christ must come out of Egypt, that is to say, we must renounce the vices and follies of our early days before we can serve God aright: for out of Egypt God calls all his sons (Matt. ii. 15).

Wordsworth says somewhere that **a man in whose nature there is no music, or poetry, can have but little knowledge of Religion.** It is equally true that those who have no sense of mystery must ever remain outside the portals of the temple of truth; they must, in fact, be "proselytes of the gate."

Old-fashioned orthodoxy was a simple minded credulity, a mere word-worship, a childish delight in the repetition of certain formulæ. As the Hindoo fakeer does yoga, sitting cross-legged on the ground and holding his breath, with his eyes directed to the end of his nose, and muttering at intervals his "om padmi man"; so these orthodox Christians perform a kind of intellectual yoga; they suppress every symptom of thought, and fixing their minds firmly on their magic volume, they attain to a complete nirvana or paralysis of the

reasoning faculty, retaining, however, as Leigh Hunt remarks, a shrewd determination to secure "a snug berth in this world and the next."

Latterly, a new school of orthodoxy has appeared which deals quite differently with the Allegory, Mystery, and Symbolism of the ancient writings. Dark sayings are dealt with in a summary fashion: even the Deity is treated with an easy familiarity. Rien n'est sacré pour un sapeur! Let us take as an instance that beautiful legend in Luke iv. 28, 29, 30, and John viii. 59, where the bright Spirit of Truth baffles and eludes the puny persecutors who would destroy him. Mr Haweis thus explains the incident: a heretical preacher is about to be murdered by his audience, but the hulking Galilean peasants who form his body-guard—that is the disciples—jostle and hustle and fight their way through the crowd and save their master's life! We are reminded of an English parliamentary election! Can anything surpass this for rank vulgarity? Surely these modern theologians have what Hawthorn calls "the touch of lead."

One more example of this practical and prosaic interpretation of Oriental imagery. Peter, the aged Janitor of Heaven, with his keys, his dog, his fishing-boat or ferry-boat (as Charon) or his ark (as Noah), the dread psychopompos who carries the trembling soul across the dark stream of Jordan or Styx, the "pilot of the

Galilean lake," as Milton calls him ; this personage appears in the pages of Mr Haweis as a bald-headed old man who cuts off somebody's ear and shuffles out of the way when the cock crows. Paul of Tarsus is "a little blear-eyed Jew"; he is chaffed by the Greeks at Corinth just as a quack doctor might be on the Margate sands!

The more we search into these questions the clearer it becomes that orthodox ideas are in great measure the result of incapacity to understand eastern methods of thought and expression.

The following note on the Holy Grail is taken from a newspaper :

"Its establishment as a symbol is so general, and so little arbitrary, that one can trace it back through Pagan times, and barbaric times, to primitive times, where it takes on a larger application. One finds it in the Red Book of Hergest, a Welsh manuscript of the time of Henry I., as the enchanted Bowl of Pryderi, as the caldron of renovation that healed the slain, and as the magic bath of Llew. It is in an old Persian legend as a cup from which soldiers drank before marching to victory. It is in an old Irish tale as the haunted caldron of Lir. And it is in the *Odyssey* as that cup of comfort Odysseus drank, refusing food, before he took the bow and slew the suitors. It was essentially a cup that gave health, or strength, or wisdom, or food, or all together. Old writers, we are told, call it sometimes a cup, sometimes a sort of shallow platter, and, in both forms, it is familiar to us, and sacred in the most holy ritual of the church. We may find it confusedly in other religions, as the body of the bear that holds the god of the hairy Ainus ; or in other stories, as the

enchanted chalice of Iseult : and in the story of the Holy Grail we find it confused continually, but always as one of three things.

"It is sometimes the dish into which the sacred hands dipped at the Last Supper : the dish containing the Paschal Lamb of old Jewish ritual. It is sometimes that same dish, carried from the holy table by Joseph of Arimathea, and used as the salver to receive the sacred blood beneath the Cross. An old legend says that Joseph of Arimathea bore this dish, 'with part of the blood of our Lord,' into England, and there converted many heathen by its virtue. It was this dish that afterwards worked miracles in the rich Abbey of Hales, in Gloucestershire, the blood liquefying and becoming red on certain feast days of the church. A line from Chaucer shows us that the middle age often made oaths, and swore—

" 'By Christes blood which is in Hayles.'

"A similar dish was at the little Abbey of Ashrug, near Berkhamstead. It must be borne in mind, also, that in the Grail stories the Grail is often spoken of as the sacramental chalice, though in its wide mediæval interpretation, which drew beauties from ritual sometimes pagan. A shallow dish is shown in the Cathedral at Genoa as the Holy Grail. It is of a brilliant clear green, and is supposed by many to be fashioned out of a single emerald. It is now cased in a wire frame, having been broken by the French in 1815. A legend says that it was brought to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba."

Note on the *Fish* as a symbol of enlightenment :

"Ea, the all-wise, revealed to men the arts of agriculture and navigation : he taught them letters and civilised them. He was represented as amphibious, part fish, part man, and was called Ea Han, or Ea the Fish. Ea Han was corrupted into Johannes or Oannes, then into the familiar John. Ea may perhaps be the same as Iao, said by a Greek oracle to be the most ancient of the gods. And the first syllable of the

word Javeh (or Iaveh) is possibly to be referred to the same root. It has been suggested that IAO, the three primitive vowel sounds, were chosen to represent the supreme God who presided over articulate speech, and therefore over reason.

“In Scandinavia also the Fish was the symbol of enlightenment : and in Ireland, Finn, the national hero, becomes wise above other men by tasting the Salmon of Knowledge.”

Additional note on the same subject, supplied by W. M. Davidson :

“In Babylon and Assyria the fish-god Dagon was represented under the image of the beast of the sea, with the head of a man, and the tail of a fish. As a man the fish-god was called Belus, Bell, or Baal, the Lord : and his consort-goddess Beltis, My Lady. Belus and Beltis gave annual re-births to the sun, described as their offspring. In the Bible their representative deities are the King and Queen of Heaven, and the sun and moon. The sun entered the zodiacal sign of the Fish in 255 B.C. Hence Dr Farrar, the Dean of Canterbury, in his ‘Life of Christ,’ states that of all the early Christian symbols the Fish was the most frequent and the favourite.”

The symbol of the Fish has fallen into disuse probably because that enlightenment for which it stands is dreaded by the priest. Yet was this token widespread from south to north, and from east to west in earliest times.

In symbolism, as in weightier matters, we are content to abide by the wisdom of the ancients, to accept *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. The fish might well serve to remind us that “ignorance is irreligion” ;<sup>1</sup> for it is both the cause and the result of irreligion.

<sup>1</sup> Hon. R. Russell, in “Religion and Life.”

## CHAPTER XVI

## SACRAMENTS AND CEREMONIES

“Ceremony was devised at first  
To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,  
Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown.”—  
*Timon of Athens*, 1, 2.

“Priests claim the prerogative of God Himself. The absolution of any layman is just as effective as that of any priest.”

—ARCHDEACON FARRAR.

It is fitting, but by no means necessary to salvation, that the great events connected with our life should be marked by some simple and suitable ceremony. Such a ceremony is called a “sacrament.” The Roman Church has seven sacraments, the Anglican only two. There are really four natural sacraments, for the important events connected with our life are four. First, birth; second, puberty, or coming of age; third, marriage, by which the race is continued; fourth, death which is the end of this stage of existence.

To these four great events the four great sacraments correspond—viz., baptism, confirmation, marriage, and the last rights, the “proxima justa” of the Romans.

Initiation into the higher or esoteric stages of Religion (the fourth and fifth), and also the eucharist have been elevated by the priesthood of most religious systems to the rank of sacra-



ments ; for much power and profit accrue to the priest from the multiplication of the ceremonies over which he presides. But initiation and the Eucharist are purely human inventions, and to invest them with Divine sanction is a blasphemy. Moreover, the state of spiritual progress indicated by each of these two terms is private, and seems the most precarious to those who strive the hardest after it. Initiation and the Eucharist are things which cannot without hypocrisy be paraded in the public view.

Baptism is dedication to God and to the service of Humanity. But the ceremony has been perverted in the interest of the priesthood in order that men may be prematurely committed in their infancy to certain creeds and dogmas. The priest has further added the blasphemous doctrine that it is not possible to stand well with God without being baptized.

The Hebrews had a barbarous rite called "circumcision," by which a male infant was marked for life, so that he could never change his religion or his nationality. Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians also practised this custom. It is probable that the Jews learnt it from them.

The Romanist, and also the "orthodox" Anglican theory of baptism, is that some evil is expelled from a child by the administration of the rite (Robertson). This belief in the efficacy of sacraments and ceremonies is a delusion which defies reason, a disease of the

mind beyond the reach of hellebore. This is the verdict of Robertson on "baptismal regeneration": "The Eternal Spirit who rules this universe must wait patiently, and come obedient to a mortal's spell to perform a magical operation at the moment which suits our convenience." This theory, he says, is degrading—"it is materialism of the grossest kind." The error must, indeed, be rank which can extort from a cleric such strong expressions of disapproval!

That man must be far gone in bigotry who objects to the ring in marriage or to the sign of the cross in baptism. But it is irrational to use these or any other symbols, unless they have for us in this present day a definite meaning and import. Water in infant baptism has no meaning for us, or rather, it symbolises no truth that we can accept. For water implies the washing away of sin.

Water was, of course, perfectly appropriate to adult baptism, or the admission of a grown-up person to the fellowship and privileges of a religious body: but an infant who has done no right or wrong as yet can have no sins to wash away. This is a good example of the degradation and confusion which priestcraft has introduced into Religion. The word "Baptism," originally applied to adult *initiation*, is transferred to the *dedication* of an infant to God. Water, which had a deep significance in the ceremony of initiation, was employed in the ceremony of dedication to which

it is peculiarly inappropriate. Thus the rite of infant baptism is reduced to absurdity.

Let me repeat that symbolism for the sake of symbolism is an unmixed evil. As soon as ever a symbol, a ceremony, or a formula ceases to represent a truth which is clearly and distinctly in the minds of the people who use this symbol, it becomes lifeless, soulless, mischievous. In other words, if we know and approve the meaning of an ancient symbol or ceremony, it may be useful and worthy to remain, provided always that it does not involve the intervention of priest, parson, or minister. On the other hand, the sooner a ceremony is dropped the better when its true import is forgotten, or when its teaching is seen to be untrue.

Confirmation is a public declaration that a boy or girl is now no longer a child, but is answerable for his or her actions, and is old enough to take part in the serious duties and responsibilities of life.

Thus the Roman youth in his sixteenth year, at the time of the vernal Equinox, assumed the *toga virilis*, and entered on the rights of citizenship. And the young Indian, having given proof of skill and courage, is admitted to rank among the warriors of his tribe. The custom is common to civilised men and to savages. It is universal, because it is founded on Nature.

Confirmation, like baptism and marriage, is

a season of rejoicing. In Romanist countries little children are presented for the *première communion*. This reduces the rite to an absurdity. The tendency of sacerdotalism is ever thus to distort and degrade a natural and useful ceremony until it becomes an object of ridicule and aversion.

The form of this ceremony, or of any other, is of very little importance, so long as the spirit is preserved: "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6). In March 1892 the Bishop of Exeter administered the rite of confirmation to thirty-eight patients of the Western Counties Idiot Asylum at Starcross! Many of these Romanist and semi-Romanist rites are well enough suited to idiots, and the time is not far distant when sane people will decline to have anything to say to them. The Pharisees baptized pots and pans (Mark vii. 4), our High Churchmen confirm gibbering imbeciles. It is hard to say how we can find anything better calculated to bring Religion into contempt than this infatuated sacerdotalism.

Of marriage it will be sufficient to remark that in becoming a civil rite it does not cease to be religious. On the contrary, no rite or ceremony can be religious in the true sense of the word until it is emancipated from the control of the priesthood and disentangled from superstition. At Athens the priest had no part in the ceremony of marriage.

A reverent silence is, perhaps, the ceremonial best suited to the end of life. In some Alpine villages it is the custom to bury the bodies of the departed at the close of day. As darkness falls, the slow procession leaves the village street and winds its way along the mountain-side. The torches throw dark shadows on the rocks and trees. The sad chant echoes through the valley. The toiling peasant has finished his day's work, and follows to their resting-place the remains of his friend and neighbour. The sorrow of the mourners is not exposed to the glare of daylight, but covered by the kindly veil of night.

Be careful never in the hearing of children to use the materialistic expression, "So-and-So has been buried," for a man consists of soul and body, and the soul cannot be buried.

The following short ceremonies, adapted from various sources, are intended merely to show what form these rites may be expected to take under the influence of a Rational Religion.

*Baptism*, or Dedication to God and to the service of Humanity (to be said by a parent, relative, or friend):

"So-and-So and So-and-So desire to thank God for the gift of a son (or a daughter), and they call us to witness their steadfast purpose to instruct him by example and by precept in the truths of Religion and the practice of morality.

“May he grow up to be a support and comfort to his parents and a credit to the religion which we profess. His name is So-and-So.

“I make on his forehead the sign of the cross, the sacred symbol of humanity, in token that he is dedicated, not to a life of worldliness or pleasure, but to the help and service of man. We hope and pray that he may ever be found among those who prefer honour and honesty to advantage and success.

“May he side with the poor and the oppressed rather than with the rich and the powerful; and may he so learn the lesson of this life and perform its duties, that he may be found worthy at the last to enter on a higher and a happier state.”

*Confirmation*, or entering on the Duties of Life (to be said by a friend whose years and character entitle him to respect):

“These young men and women here present desire to thank God, our Heavenly Father and Mother, that they have escaped the perils of infancy and the dangers of early life. They rejoice that they have been taught the lessons of morality and the truths of religion; and they now enter on the duties of life, purposing so to live, that they may be no discredit to the faith in which they have been trained, but pass through life as useful members of society. And we who now witness their good resolve, do earnestly hope and pray that they may triumph

over the temptations and trials of life, and be accounted worthy at last to enter on a higher sphere of usefulness and happiness."

*Marriage* (to be said by the oldest relative, or by a public officer appointed):

To the man:

"Are you of age?" "Yes."

"Have you a reasonable expectation of being able to support a family?" "Yes."

He asks the woman:

"Are you of age?" "Yes."

"Do you marry of your own free will?" "Yes."

"Have you seriously considered the step you are about to take?" "Yes."

"Has either of you concealed from the other anything of vital importance?" "No."

He asks the congregation:

"Does any one present protest against this marriage?"

A short homily may then be read, if it is thought desirable.

Both the man and the woman repeat these words:

"We solemnly agree, in the sight of God, to live together as man and wife."

They exchange rings, sign their names, and receive the congratulations of their friends.

*Burial* (to be said by a relative or friend):

"In the name of God, who is Lord of Life,

we commit to the earth (or to the flames, or to the deep) the body of our departed friend and relative. May his faults and failings be written in the sand, and may we strive to imitate his virtues. Let us not sorrow as those who have no hope, but let us rather profit by our sad bereavement, and so live that when our fleeting life shall close we may be accounted worthy to meet again in joy those beloved friends from whom we part in sorrow here."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE EUCHARIST AND FRATERNITY

"Goodness [Religion] is possible for me only if I accept my unity with all mankind."—TOLSTOY.

"No one could tell me where my soul might be :  
I searched for God, but God eluded me :  
I sought my brother out and found all three."

—ERNEST CROSBY.

THE early Christians used to meet and hold a dinner, supper, love-feast, or agapemone, in memory of their departed teacher, and in token of their brotherhood.

This was a beautiful custom, for the bread and wine which they ate and drank together were symbols of their common dependence on the bounty of the God of Nature, and pledges of their fidelity to their faith.



The Greek word *eu-kharist-os* means either well-pleasing or thankful; the root is *kharis*, grace or gratitude. The rite may have obtained this name because these simple Socialistic believers were grateful to God for the bread of truth and the wine of inspiration which raised them above the prevailing materialism.

The Eucharist was a *bona-fide* meal, no mouth-ing of little scraps of consecrated bread or wafers, no muttering of magical words by priest or parson—a *bona-fide* meal in which rich and poor, learned and ignorant, refined and rude, met together and forgot for the time their social distinctions. It was a periodic assertion of human brotherhood and fraternity, which the fierce competition of life makes us forget. Grant Allen's theory that the Eucharist had its origin in a cannibal orgy may or may not be true. We are concerned here only with the meaning attached to the rite by the higher races of man, and those who are least ferocious.

On the coins of the French Republic is engraved the motto, "liberty, equality, fraternity." Mazzini ("Europe") wisely rejects "this great formula which the imitative mind of democracy has rendered European."

Of these three magic words, the first "liberty," is for those few only who, being subject to the higher laws of God and Nature, the "law of liberty" (Jas. ii. 12), and being partakers of the "glorious liberty of the children of God"

(Rom. viii. 21), need not the restraints of human authority and law. For all others, liberty means licence. "Deo parere libertas est": "Obedience to God is liberty" (Seneca). "The natural man (says Swedenborg) is a slave and thrall: the spiritual man [that is, the idealist] is a gentleman and master."

"He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside."—COWPER, *Task*.

So Lessing (*Nathan*):

"Es sind nicht alle frei die ihrer Ketten spotten":  
"All are not free who laugh their chains to scorn."

Liberty is not an ideal, *per se*, but it is a condition without which no ideal can be realised. For this reason progress will ever wear the Phrygian cap.

Charles Kingsley ("Town Geology") says: "As men grow older, they begin to see not only that things are wrong, but also that the freedom-mill can do very little towards grinding them right again."

The second term of the famous French motto, "equality," is a thing which never yet existed nor can exist. There is no equality or approach to equality among men, or among the lower animals. Even in a pack of wolves there is one that howls louder than the rest.

One amœba or protococcus may be very similar to another, but as we rise in the scale

of life this similarity disappears, and with it equality. In the monotonous pine forests of the North one tree resembles another for hundreds of miles. But in the higher (angiospermous) vegetation of the Tropics there is endless diversity; no two trees are similar in beauty or in usefulness. Some men have more heart, more courage, and more energy than their neighbours. It is, as Ruskin says, the part of such men to take the lead, and the duty of smaller, weaker men to follow.

"Thus let the wiser make the rest obey."—POPE.

The downfall of Samaria was not far distant when "the lowest of the people" began to keep the conscience of the nation (1 Kings xiii. 31). Perhaps we have in this fact the clue to the disappearance of the ten tribes from history.

But "fraternity" is an ideal of which we require to be frequently reminded. The Eucharist might serve this most important purpose, if it were restored to its original intention; but, on the other hand, "if no heart warm this rite," says Emerson, "the hollow, dry, creaking formality is all too plain." Charity is, indeed, the very essence of the Eucharist, that charity which is not satisfied with writing a cheque or paying a subscription.

"The holy supper is kept, indeed,  
In whatso we share with another's need.  
Not what we give, but what we share,  
For the gift without the giver is bare."

—LOWELL, *Vision of Sir Launfal*.

But the "holy supper" has unfortunately, degenerated into a mysterious performance presided over by a priest, to which he attaches a magical efficacy. With a bobbing of heads and a tinkling of little bells, and, as likely as not, with his tongue in his cheek, he goes through the pantomime; he mutters his "hoc est corpus," and the poor folk, craving for Religion, are put off with "hocus pocus!" "The god Pan is dead," but the god Panis has taken his place!

This superstitious rite is now "celebrated," strange to say, before breakfast. It used to take place two or three times in the year—at Easter, Christmas, and so on; then, as the Anglican Church drifted farther and farther in the direction of Rome, it was administered every Sunday. Latterly not even this was found sufficient, and we have reached the stage of "daily communion." Superstition must be added to the four things that never say "it is enough" (Prov. xxx. 15).

The "transubstantiation" of the Romanist and ritualist, for there is no difference worth mention, is a monstrous invention. In the doctrine of the "real presence" blasphemy has reached its culminating point. It never entered into the head of any pagan, of any savage, or even of any maniac, to manufacture a god and then to swallow him! A priest alone could think of such a thing. The Thibetan makes

a sacred image of butter, but he does not eat it.

"Holy Communion" in its concrete form is a friendly meeting of co-religionists, presided over by no priest or minister, blighted by the intrigues of no paid officer. In its abstract essence it is celebrated, not once a quarter or monthly or daily, but hourly and incessantly. "Holy Communion," says Mr Headlam, "pre-supposes Holy Communists!" And the "Holy Communist" is he who affirms the brotherhood of Man as a consequence of the Fatherhood and Motherhood of God: who earnestly desires to lay aside social distinctions, to forget private dislikes and jealousies, and to be in charity with all men: who is weary of competition and warfare, and longs for the reign of peace on earth and good-will among men: who wishes to bear in mind that closer communion and spiritual fellowship which binds us to each other and to all those who share the high and holy faith of idealism: who is thankful for the heroes, prophets, saints, martyrs and reformers of our own race and of the world: who desires humbly to follow their good example and to continue the work which they began, so that at the last he may lay hold upon the higher life. Such is the "Holy Communist": and he requires no little wafers and no sips of syrupy stuff.

The Eucharist is not in the least degree

peculiar to Christianity. Most ancient nations had their secret and mysterious rites at which the uninitiated might not be present. Who has not heard of those ceremonies held in honour of the great goddess Demeter, and called after the town of Eleusis in Attica, the Eleusinian mysteries?

It is extremely probable that the Eucharist served not only to bind together the early followers of Christ, but also to make them known to each other. (See Luke xxiv. 30 and 31.) A particular attitude or motion of the hands in eating or drinking would make a Christian known to his fellow-believers without any risk of betraying him to the heathens who thirsted for his blood. Similar customs survive to this day as a sort of pastime among free-masons, and for more serious purposes in the dark and dangerous society of Jesus. Soldiers also have their pass-words, and it may well be doubted whether any organisation can afford to disregard these ancient helps and encouragements to *esprit de corps* and fidelity. The day may not be far distant when the men of progress will require their signs and watch-words as of old. When materialism brings us to such a pass that government is merely an organised conspiracy of the parasitic classes backed by militarism and sacerdotalism; then it goes hard with the idealist, and we shall be

driven to combine against the despotism under which we are crushed.

It is important to bear in mind that brotherhood, the supreme ideal, cannot be dissociated from the other ideals with which it is bound up. Among the cruel or the sensual there is and can be no true brotherhood, for man can unite only in that complete idealism which the theist sums up in one word GOD. Thus Schiller couples human brotherhood with the Fatherhood of God "*Brüder, über'm Sternenzelt muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.*"

So Disraeli ("Tancred"): "The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common Father." Coleridge (*Religious Musings*) teaches the same truth:

"'Tis the sublime of man, our noontide majesty, to know ourselves parts and proportions of one wondrous whole. *This fraternises man*, this constitutes our charities and bearings. But 'tis God diffused through all that doth make all one whole."

No idealist will confound Walt Whitman's unclean "comradeship" with fraternity, for fraternity is one of the sacred things.

#### NATIONAL ANTHEM

Maker of earth and sea,  
What shall we render Thee?

All things are Thine :  
Ours but from day to day,

## THE GREAT AND GOOD

Still with one heart we pray,  
"God bless our land alway,  
This land of Thine."

Mighty in brotherhood,  
Mighty for God and good,  
Let us be Thine.  
Here let the nations see  
Toil from the curse set free,  
Labour and Liberty,  
One cause—and Thine.

Here let glad Plenty reign ;  
Here let none seek in vain  
Our help and Thine—  
No heart for want of friend  
Fail ere the timely end,  
But love for ever blend  
Man's cause and Thine.

Here let Thy peace abide ;  
Never may strife divide  
This land of Thine.  
Let us united stand,  
One great fraternal band,  
Heart to heart, hand to hand,  
Heart and hand Thine.

Strong to defend the right,  
Proud in all nations' sight,  
Lowly in Thine,—  
One in all noble fame,  
Still be our path the same,  
Onward in Freedom's name,  
Upward in Thine.

—From the *Centennial*, by J. BRUNTON STEPHENS.



NATIONAL ANTHEM

1. God bless our native land !  
May Heaven's protecting hand  
Still guard our shore !  
May peace her powers extend,  
Foe be transformed to friend,  
And Britain's power depend  
On war no more !
2. May just and prudent laws  
Uphold the public cause,  
And bless our isle !  
Home of the brave and free,  
The land of liberty,  
We pray that still on Thee  
Kind Heaven may smile !
3. And not this land alone ;  
But be Thy mercies known  
From shore to shore !  
Let all the nations see  
That men should brothers be,  
And form one family  
The wide world o'er.

—By W. E. HICKSON, from *Hymns of Life*, by H. W. SMITH.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS, FESTIVALS AND FASTS

“Six days’ stern labour shuts the poor  
From Nature’s careless banquet-hall :  
The seventh an angel opes the door,  
And smiling welcomes all.”—LYTTON.

“This day is holy to the Lord ; be not sad, but make merry, and give a share to those who have nothing.”—I ESDRAS ix. 53.

“The priests’ Sabbath has lost the splendour of Nature, and it is unlovely : we are glad when it is over.”—EMERSON.

SUNDAY is the weekly holiday of Christian nations, absurdly called “Sabbath” by the evangelical sects. The Jewish “Sabbath” was held on a Saturday. It matters nothing what day is chosen as the holiday, nor is it even necessary that a whole nation or an entire district should keep holiday on the same day. The principle is that every man should “rest from his labour” on one day in seven. It was, of course, never contemplated that a man should rest seven days out of seven.

They are shortsighted who cannot see that fixing the minimum number of working days per *year* by the institution of Sunday implies regulating also the number of working hours per *day*. For what is the object of the weekly holiday? Clearly to prevent men being brutalised and degraded, converted into mere automata, by too much toil, or broken by the dull monotony

of ill-paid drudgery. Who is better off, the man who works seven days a week, and eight hours to the day, or he who toils twelve hours per day and has his Sunday free? If this principle be not understood, or be lost sight of, Sunday, the weekly holiday, ceases to be an institution designed by wise legislators in ancient times for the benefit of humanity, and sinks into a superstition supported by the priesthood for their private interest. The savage who knows no Sunday or saints' day, is better off than many of our labourers who work from dawn till dark, for he at least may rest when he is tired, he can find time to dance and sing when he is merry. If the limitation of working days per year be not supported and completed by the limitation of the working hours per day, it is futile, and the hebdomadal respite is a mockery. If there be any truth in idealism, toil which amounts to slavery must be degrading and fatal in the end not merely to those who are compelled to endure it, but also to those who think they profit by it.

On Sunday the rational believer will be glad to meet his fellows, and to consider with them the great problems of the day, but he will have nothing to do with "services" or sermons, orthodox or heterodox, high, low, or broad.

Beware lest you consider Sunday more sacred than Monday, or any other day, for rest and recreation are neither more nor less sacred than

work. It is vitally important to bear in mind that those things only are sacred which are fixed by Nature, and which man cannot control. A respite of certain hours per day, or of certain days per year, is an excellent institution, but of purely human origin.

Against the gloom of the calvanistic "Sabbath" the High Churchmen, wise as serpents, have protested. Keble established in his village a Sunday cricket club. Amusement is an essential part of human life, and a religious system which disregards this fact stands self-condemned. It will be taken for granted that by amusement we do not understand the dissipations of fashionable "society," still less the scandalous spectacles of the theatre. Every kind of amusement like every variety of work, must be in close relation with Religion. This was indeed the case in ancient times.

In his "Studies Scientific and Social," Dr Alfred Russell Wallace has a useful chapter on the rational observance of Sunday.

Festivals or feasts are periodical public holidays, which may last one or more days. The four great natural festivals are astronomical, and mark primarily the changes of the year. Each of them may also have a spiritual meaning.

(a) Christmas or New Year, 21st December, when the shortest day is past, and the sun is, as it were, born afresh. This is also the

festival of the birth of the solar hero, as the word "Christmas" implies.

(b) Midsummer, or "La Saint Jean," the time of the longest day, 21st June.

(c) The vernal Equinox, Easter, or springtide, 20th March, when Nature is renewed. This is also the festival of the Resurrection.

(d) The autumnal Equinox, or Michaelmas, 23rd September.

The minor festivals of harvest home, vintage, etc., are also natural, but their date will vary in each country and climate, as of course the dates of Christmas and Midsummer will be reversed in the Southern hemisphere.

Besides the great natural festivals which are common to all humanity, each race and nation has certain festivals peculiar to itself, instituted either to perpetuate some religious idea, or to commemorate some great event, or in honour of some distinguished man. These are conventional, not natural, and are of minor importance. Thus, the Hebrew passover commemorated the deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage, and 4th July, in the United States, is the anniversary of their Declaration of Independence. The Romanist calendar is filled with these conventional festivals, which they call "saints' days."

There are two objections to these Roman and Anglican "saints' days": first, that a number of quite unimportant individuals are commemorated, while many of the world's greatest "saints" are

excluded. On what pretext does the Anglican Church omit Wycliffe, Latimer, and Milton from her list of "saints"? Is there no nimbus round their heads, forsooth? Has Britain any greater heroes, the world any greater saints? Secondly, it is obvious that if all these "saints' days" were kept as festivals, little work would be done. This was actually the case in papal Italy.

Fasts are solemn festivals, or days of sadness, when we call to mind some loss or disaster.

Many people fast at certain seasons of the year, or on certain days of the week. The practice of abstaining from luxuries at certain times may be a useful discipline for gross and sensual people, but fasting is less necessary for those who live soberly and plainly than for those whose life is luxurious. Similarly, those whose amusements are rational have less need to mortify themselves by abstaining from their customary relaxations in Lent or any other season.

The Roman Church forbids meat on Fridays: a valuable admonition that flesh is not a necessary article of human food. As men become more thoughtful and less brutal they will gradually turn to the reform inaugurated by Pythagoras, and cease to pollute themselves with the blood of the higher animals. Flesh-eating probably originated in sacrifices to demon gods, or else in the deliberate attempt of warlike savages to render themselves still more ferocious.

The great Christian yearly fast is called Lent ; it lasts forty days, because Christ is supposed to have fasted forty days before his temptation. (Matt. iv. 2). This mystic number forty occurs frequently in the Bible : see Gen. vii. 17 ; Exod. xxiv. 18 ; Num. xiii. 25 ; 1 Sam. 16 ; 1 Kings xix. 8 ; Jonah iii. 4 ; Deut. xxv. 3. The yearly fast of the Mohammedans is called Ramadan.

## CHAPTER XIX

### PRAYER AND WORSHIP

"The worship of God is mainly the service of Man."—H. DRUMMOND.

(The word "mainly" might with advantage be omitted.)

"O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother :  
Where pity dwells, the soul of good is there :  
*To worship rightly is to love each other :*  
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."

"According to Christ, worship needs no consecrated place or person."—A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

"Prayer is an ascent of the mind to God, a desiring things fit to be desired."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

"Satis Deum coluit quisquis imitatus est."—SENECA.  
[To imitate God is to worship God.]

THERE are two kinds of prayer : first, for rain or fair weather, health, wealth, etc. ; secondly, for more important things than these.

As regards the first, it is an empty mockery, for it must be obvious, even to a child, that

neither storm nor famine nor disease is turned aside by prayer—no, not though all the good men in the world should combine to pray.

Our bishops, priests, and deacons, like the Indian "medicine men," imagine that they can bring rain after the manner of Elijah on Carmel, by praying for it (1 Kings xviii.). But if we were able to produce precipitation by prayer, or to curb the whirling cyclone by hanging a text upon the rigging, like the Arab sailor, or if the little amulets which the Romanist poor wear round their necks could put to flight the microscopic fungus of the cholera, should we not be tempted to neglect all precautions, and banish prudence? This is precisely what happens in some Romanist countries—prayer has become a substitute for cleanliness.

Moreover, if we had the power to control the forces of Nature by prayers and charms, it is certain that we should disarrange the seasons and dislocate the universe.

Herbert Spencer says :

"We hear with surprise of the savage who, falling down a precipice, ascribes the failure of his foothold to a malicious demon : and we smile at the kindred notion of the ancient Greek, that his death was prevented by a goddess who unfastened for him the thong of the helmet by which his enemy was dragging him. But daily, without surprise, we hear men who describe themselves as saved from shipwreck by 'Divine



interposition,' who speak of having 'providentially' missed a train which met with a fatal disaster, and who call it a 'mercy' to have escaped injury from a falling chimney-pot; men who, in such cases, recognise physical causation no more than do the uncivilised or semi-civilised. The Veddah, who thinks that failure to hit an animal with his arrow resulted from inadequate invocation of an ancestral spirit, and the Christian priest who says prayers over a sick man in the expectation that the course of his disease will be so stayed, differ only in respect of the agent from whom they expect supernatural aid, and the phenomena to be altered by him. The necessary relations among causes and effects are tacitly ignored by the last as much as by the first."

It is natural to most men in illness, danger, or misery, to pray for relief rather than for courage, and it seems strange to the suppliant that no answer breaks the eternal silence. From every corner of this world humanity sends up to heaven its bitter cry: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!" (Matt. xxvii. 46); and why is no answer given? God alone can tell. "It is a great thing, very great (says à Kempis) to need no comfort human or divine;" but alas for those who are in this sad case! It is of no avail to seek refuge in the superstitions of our childhood: a rational faith alone can help.

Your public prayers are the outcome of your ignorance: they are an insult to the Deity. He knows full well what He will do, and His ever-

lasting purpose may not be turned aside. Your litanies reek of dishonesty and duplicity. They are a transparent sham, a substitute for the justice and the mercy which you do not practice, for the righteousness which you hate.

Prayers for worldly benefit will no longer be heard when the minds of men are early trained to the idea that the universe is ruled according to law and order, not by magic or caprice.

"God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of Nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession" (Emerson).

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered, or unexpressed."—MONTGOMERY.

The desires of the soul should be for those things which most concern the soul—purity, patience, peace, and blessings such as these. As regards the things of this world, we must say with Socrates: "May the gods grant us what is best, whether we ask it or no."

True prayer is either adoration or aspiration, as when we say, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done!" (Matt. vi. 9).

"Petitions yet remain which heaven will hear.  
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,  
Obedient passions, and a will resigned."

JOHNSON, *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

The sweet incense which they burn in the Romanist churches is a beautiful emblem of aspiration (Ps. cxli. 2).

It may be objected that the Gospel teaches us to pray for worldly benefits. In many passages Christ urges the very reverse. For instance, in Luke xii. 30, he tells his disciples that "the nations of the world seek after profit and prosperity, but you should despise these things." But it need not concern us in the least whether the New or the Old Testament teaches or does not teach the efficacy of prayer: "*Amicus Christus; magis amica veritas.*" Men who believed in miracles, magic, and sorcery, who thought that visions, dreams, and nightmares were messages from heaven, who imagined that epilepsy and mania were devils which could be driven from one animal into another, and that when an accident happened, the unfortunate victim must have provoked the Deity (Luke xiii. 4; John ix. 2)—men in this primitive mental condition might well believe in the efficacy of prayer or any other irrational doctrine.

We must neither be slaves of the priest, like the Romanist, nor yet of a Bible, like the Protestant—

"Who bows himself in dust before a book,  
And thinks that the great God is his alone."—LOWELL.

The reason which God has given us is higher than priest or Bible, and is the ultimate appeal:

"On argument alone our faith is built."—YOUNG.

To sum the matter up: prayer is either aspiration or superstition, and by aspiration we mean

meditating upon those ideals which lead heavenward, and enquiring how far we have conformed to these ideals. This is a private matter, and cannot without profanation and hypocrisy be dragged into the public view.

Early Christian worship was more or less orgiastic or hysterical. Their "prophesying" was evidently something wilder than our most excited preaching, and their "speaking with tongues" must have been some sort of raving (Acts ii. 3, x. 46, xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, xiii. 1, xiv. 2). Then, again, the visions they saw—chiefly, as we might expect, when the body was exhausted by fasting—were accepted as signs from heaven (Acts x. 10).

Frenzied excitement was not unknown to most ancient forms of worship, but it was especially characteristic of the Southern (Semitic and pre-Semitic) religions. In this respect the religion of our age has altered much. The Northern races are more sober, and Christianity in spreading northwards has come much under their influence. There are few traces left of this hysterical excitement which is incompatible with education and enlightenment. In another very important respect the worship of these days differs from that of the past. Among Jew and Gentile, Greek and Roman, the gods had to be propitiated by periodical sacrifices. The gods were still angry demons who must be appeased lest they destroy us. This idea still lingers in

Romanism, for the central point of their worship is still the "sacrifice of the mass," a magical ceremony which is supposed to ward off the wrath of God. There is still plenty of occasion for sacrifice, but we have come to know that it is self-sacrifice which God requires of us.

As early Christianity broke, to a great extent, with the orgiastic worship of the most ancient races; as Protestantism got rid of the pagan superstition of sacrifice, which survives in the "sacrifice of the mass," so the time has come to throw off one more shackle of the past. The dreary and monotonous prayers and supplications of our liturgies, Anglican and other, must be got rid of, with the anthropomorphic ideas that belong to them. It has long been evident that prayers are not answered in this world, even when uttered by the best of men. It is futile to argue the point. Of course a devout man will feel a shock, for we have been accustomed from our youth up to listen to these melodious litanies, and we have come to like the sound of them, just as the Thibetan enjoys the rattle of his prayer-mill when the wind moves it briskly.

We must not forget that each step forward is, and must be, accompanied by a wrench, an uprooting of something which unthinking people regard as vital. A devout Romanist will tell us that, apart from the "sacrifice of the mass," there is no religion possible. This is his point

of contact with the Deity, "the muttering of the mass, where god is made and eaten all day long" (Browning, *The Bishop's Tomb*). Remove this magical ceremony, and he must fall into atheism. In precisely the same way does the Protestant cling to his prayers, striving to persuade himself, against the evidence of his senses, that there is some mysterious efficacy in the time-honoured formulæ. But how long are we to stultify ourselves and mock the Deity by keeping up a custom which flies in the face of reason? To what purpose are these public prayers? Are we not like a slave who goes on salaaming abjectly when his master has shown him clearly that he does not value his bowing and scraping? "Fervent words spoken in the pulpit or out of it, and in the ordinary language of men, are better than the repetition of official litanies" (Frances Power Cobbe). Let us bear in mind that "work is worship": *laborare est orare*. We have here a kind of prayer which can never be ineffectual. Work done for the help and benefit of another is a prayer which the progress of enlightenment can never render obsolete.

There is no fear, or rather there is no danger, that Religion will come to an end because this or that superstition is cleared away. When the wild excitement of savage worship disappeared, with its dangerous reaction, Religion survived. When sacrifice, with its attendant superstitions, was

discarded, Religion did not sink. On the contrary, those countries in the south of Europe which rejected this reform can hardly be said to have any Religion. Reform has not killed Religion, but the want of reform is destroying both Religion and morality.

The extinction of sacrifice involves that of sacerdotalism. The priest is a man supposed to hold a special divine licence to perform certain magical acts, the chief of which is the "sacrifice of the mass." This magical and sacrificial performance is the only *raison d'être* of the priest; when it is discontinued, the sacerdotal office disappears. Protestantism has got rid of the priest. Similarly, when Religion is purged of public prayers and litanies, the office of clergyman and minister will become effete, and society will be freed from the incubus of a parasitic class who are the enemies of reform, and the natural allies of every abuse that crushes down humanity. These men are the intermediaries in what Plato ("Euthyphron") calls a "traffic with the gods." Of this traffic Theism knows nothing, nor has rational Religion any part in it.

The æsthetic element in life, music, and art, will be more closely allied to Religion in proportion as it is disentangled from superstition. Evangelical philistinism at the Reformation confounded art and music with superstition, but this ignorant and vulgar prejudice is rapidly

dying out. Epictetus warns us against the neglect of abstract beauty, and Ruskin says: "That it is a false puritanism which consists in the dread or the disdain of beauty." For beauty is very near akin to truth. When it is understood that all art and all music must be either sacred or accursed, then these elevating influences, no longer confined to churches, will pervade the whole of life. The old sacerdotal mummeries are now replaced in the more advanced churches,<sup>1</sup> by a kind of musical entertainment performed by the choir and clergyman. As public prayers and litanies cannot be reconciled with reason, they are disguised in music, drowned in the pealing of the organ.

We must discard, then, as superstitions these varieties of public worship, viz. :

- i. The orgiastic : frenzied dancing, hysterical excitement of any sort.
- ii. The sacrificial : originally a bloody sacrifice, replaced by a magical ceremony performed by a priest.
- iii. The anthropomorphic : prayers, litanies, services, sermons, etc., presided over by a clergyman or minister, or paid officer of any sort.

What remains when these superstitions have ceased to stand between us and Religion? What do we see when they have ceased to blind us and confuse our view? We discern more clearly

<sup>1</sup> See "Music and Morals," by Haweis.



than ever the great ideals of truth and justice and purity and charity. These constitute Religion : these have no need of priest or minister. The *service of Humanity* remains, and that requires no public worship.

I have not said, and do not wish to imply, that religious meetings of like-minded men should not be held for mutual instruction and encouragement. Nor have I suggested that the anthem should be silent and hymns be sung no more. The idealist will gladly sing hymns in praise of Epictetus or Socrates, of Christ or Crishna or Buddha, of Apollo or Diana, of Mary or Maia, of Carlyle or Mazzini. But it is vitally important that these things should be done and ordered by the people themselves, not through the intervention of a special class set apart and paid for the purpose. The religious "services" of the future will be co-operative.

The following prayers are not to be repeated in public by priest, minister, or paid officer of any sort. Most of them are adapted by the kind permission of the author from "A Basket of Fragments" by I. O.

#### DOMINUS VITAE

Lord of Life, revealed inwardly in Conscience and Reason, outwardly in the beauty and the mystery of Nature, reflected also in the Great and Good : we would follow those Ideals which lead through suffering to wisdom, through present loss to higher life : we would enter the Ark of Idealism which rises above the dark waters of death and rests at last upon the mount of God.

## DOXOLOGY

All praise to God, the Giver of all Good, in the name of Conscience and Nature and Humanity!

## ANIMA MUNDI

God, the eternal Soul and Substance of the World, Giver of Life to all, may we Thy children, atoning our wills with Thy divine laws, sacrificing our lower to our higher self, and giving ourselves for others; may we, thus learning the lessons of this life, follow the path which leads to perfection and to peace.

## DEUS AUCTOR

God, the Grand Architect of the Universe, Who dost ever create all things by number, by measure, and by weight, and makest all things corresponding the one to the other in Love divine and Wisdom infinite, grant us in the things which are seen to see Thee Who art unseen, and by the things which are known to know Thee Who art unknown, that from the things which are material we may be led to the things which are spiritual, and by the things which are temporal we may advance to the things which are eternal. We pray in the name of all who have suffered for truth and progress, for Thou art All in all, under all, above all and through all, in Whom all things do live eternally.

## DEUS BENEFACTOR

God, Whose loving-kindness extends to every creature, giving to all the same breath of life, and like feelings and passions with ourselves; take away our selfishness, and give us tender hearts, and the graces of considerateness to all; show Thy mercy upon us, that to others we may show the same, and grant us Thy Light, and Love, and Peace; and to Thee be the glory through the Ages to come.

## PARENS NOSTER

God, our Father and Mother, Who art within us and without, praised be Thy name in Wisdom, Love, and Equity ; Thy kingdom come to all ; Thy holy will be done always, as in Heaven, so on Earth. Give us day by day the bread of Truth and the wine of holy-zeal. As we seek to perfect others, so perfect us in mind and heart and character. Show upon us Thy goodness, that to others we may show the same. In the hour of temptation deliver us from evil ; for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, from age to age.

## STOIC PRAYER FROM EPICTETUS

Lead me, great and powerful Providence, through all that is ordained for me. I fain would follow willingly, for it is impious and futile to resist the will of Heaven.

## WORSHIP

Some worship God in churches grand and dim,  
Where incense burns and the rich organ swells,  
And white-robed choir-boys chant the praising hymn.  
Others there are whom all this pomp repels:  
They draw not near to God by all this show :  
To them the ritual is but empty form :  
They see God better in the sunset glow,  
Or in the mighty grandeur of the storm.  
On every blade of grass, on every tree,  
On every form of life, on snow and rain,  
E'en on the very rocks and stones they see  
The stamp of God, indelible and plain.  
With Nature they draw nearer unto God.  
Than when they through the solemn church aisles trod.

—H. PITMAN CLARKE.

## THE HEART'S RELIGION

My heart's religion is an earnest love  
Of all that's Good, and Beautiful, and True !  
My noblest temple is this sky above—  
This vast pavilion of unclouded blue ;  
These mountains are my altars, which subdue  
My wildest passions in their wildest hours ;  
My hymn is ever many-voiced and new,—  
From bird and bee, from wind and wave it pours ;  
My incense is the breath of herbs, leaves, fruits, and flowers.

Here Health and Piety, twin angels, shed  
The healing influences of their hallowed wings ;  
Here joyous Freedom hovers round my head,  
And young Hope whispers of immortal things ;  
Here lavish Music, dainty Ariel, flings  
Mellifluous melody on every hand ;  
Here mild and many-featured Beauty brings  
Dim visions of that undiscovered land,  
Where the unshackled soul shall boundlessly expand

Man cannot stand beneath a loftier dome  
Than this cerulean canopy of light—  
The Eternal's vast, immeasurable home,  
Lovely by day, and wonderful by night !  
Than this enamelled floor, so greenly bright,  
A richer pavement man hath never trod ;  
He cannot gaze upon a lovelier sight,  
Than fleeting cloud, fresh wave, and fruitful sod—  
Leaves of that boundless Book, writ by the hand of God.

—J. CRITCHLEY PRINCE.

## CHAPTER XX

## CHURCHES AND SACERDOTALISM

"Ciel, laisse-moi tout dire ! O ciel, source des êtres,  
Tu vois mon âme : il faut que je parle à ces prêtres !"

—VICTOR HUGO.

"There is a right, and there is a wrong, and Humanity needs no priest to explain which is which."—G. F. WATTS.

"Your trade in Heaven shall soon be at a stand,  
And all your goods lie dead upon your hand."—DRYDEN.

"One of the most extraordinary and at the same time the most saddening spectacles presented to us in the drama of the world's history is that of the clergy of the present day masquerading as the followers, servants, and ministers of the Christ of the gospels."  
—STELLA BEATTIE.

"The Church is an institution by which thought is fettered, and religious inquiry is prevented, which tends to promote disingenuous professions in its adherents, which divides the whole nation into hostile camps, and which throws obstacles in the way of all social, intellectual, and political progress."

"Orthodoxy appears to me to be a sort of religious [superstitious] denial of God, as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness."  
—THOMAS PAINE.

THE word Christianity includes two distinct and contradictory things, the Idealism of the Gospels and the mountain mass of superstition which has smothered it. Now, superstition is transient and variable, a mere mirage of the mind ; but idealism constitutes the permanent and vital element in Christianity and in all other Religion that is worthy of the name. The unenlightened bigot clings to the superstition, and the idealism in his soul is choked and strangled by it. The

materialist who by the very constitution of his mind is unable to distinguish the permanent from the transient elements in Religion, rejects both. To use a homely German saying, he throws out the baby with the bath water. But he who has eyes to see the beauty of the higher life ; he whose ears are not deaf to the eternal harmonies, will take pains (and it is a tedious task) to separate the ideals from the superstitions in which they are entangled.

A discriminating mind does not deny for the sake of denial : " The judgment which is impatient of falsehood takes no pleasure in mere rejection ; it wishes rather to discover that which it can embrace and hold fast."<sup>1</sup> When Theists like Francis Newman and Miss Power Cobbe object to be called Christians, their motives are not those of the materialist. The ideal element in Christianity is no stumbling-block to these high souls ; but they refuse to be identified with the corruptions of the Christian Churches precisely because they understand and value the Idealism of the Gospels. Channing says : " I am sure that Christianity [he means, of course, the teaching of Christ] will endure, but I do not say that what we now call Christianity is to live for ever. I think not ; I hope not."

When a religious system, however noble at the first, falls away from Idealism, and turns its back on progress and enlightenment, it

<sup>1</sup> Maurice, " Lessons of Hope."

becomes "a creed outworn," that is to say, a superstition. Robertson ("Star in the East") thus describes the downward progress:

"There are two periods in the history of every superstition. At first it is deserving of reverence, and men accept it because it is associated with the highest feelings that are in man, and is the channel for God's manifestation to the soul. And there is a later time when it becomes less and less credible, when clearer science is superseding its pretensions. But the priests will not let the old superstition die. They go on, *half impostors and half deceived* by the strong delusion wherewith they believe their own lie."

Romanism has long since entered on this latter stage. The Council of Trent made all progress impossible. "Popular Catholicism, as it exists in Southern Europe, is as polytheistic and idolatrous as any form of paganism" (R. J. Lecky). "The Roman Church has encouraged, rather than repressed the pagan tendency in her people, while she sternly quenches all tendency to inquiry and discussion." The paganism of Romish Christianity is clearly exposed by Draper in his "Religion and Science," pp. 46-52. In every country of Europe the Roman superstition is despised. The German looks down on "Pfafferei": the Frenchman cries, "*À bas la calotte!*" and in order to express his loathing has been driven to invent such terms as *bigot*, *cagot*, *cuistre*, and *tartuffe*. Even the Irishman,

whose unsuspecting honesty and simplicity of character make him an easy prey to imposture, is beginning to have some misgivings.

Protestantism is fast following the same course. The so-called Religion of the Protestant Non-conformists is nothing more than a cheap, shoddy, pinchbeck burlesque of the more fashionable Baal - worship. There is morality of a conventional sort, there is an abundance of mediæval theology, but the practical and vital part of Religion is deliberately avoided. No protest is made against public wrongs and abuses, because the preacher knows full well that those of his patrons who profit by these abuses would make things very unpleasant for him if he dared to do so. Does the country wage an unjust war? The subject is studiously avoided, because, forsooth, "the pulpit has no concern with politics." In other words, Protestantism has sunk so low that it is no longer concerned with right and wrong. Read Mazzini, you time-servers of the pulpit, and learn that "Religion and politics are inseparable." Professor Muirhead ("Philosophy of Life") says ; "There is no piety worthy of the name which is not political, which has not an eye to the good of fellow-citizens." Who ever heard from a Protestant pulpit any protest against the diabolical wickedness of vivisection and the hideous materialism of the medical profession? No, these pious preachers prefer that "friendship of the world which is enmity with God." Out



upon this Protestantism which no longer protests! This mean and soulless superstition which condones every wrong in which Dives and his satellites are interested!

Protestants have abolished the older sacerdotalism, but they have not helped us much, for they have substituted in its place something more mercenary and more contemptible. They have invented a commercial Religion, a kind of spiritual shopkeeping from which we turn with aversion and disgust. Gambetta declared, what most men knew already, that clericalism is the greatest enemy of human progress. But the Protestantism of this generation affords a melancholy proof that a paid ministry of any sort is an incubus upon Religion. A paid minister is the slave of his congregation. He must suppress the truth or be himself suppressed by his hearers: he must temporise or lose his pulpit: he must lie or starve. If a paid ministry were a necessity, it would still be a curse: but the Quakers have proved that the minister is no more needed than the priest.

In condemning a paid ministry we refer to a class; we do not presume to judge individuals. Once entangled in a given "profession," a man is under overwhelming pressure to conform to the usages of that profession. He loses his individuality: he becomes part of a system. Thus a citizen, when he has enlisted as a paid soldier, must kill and devastate. All cruelties

which he may commit are the result of that original false step when he bargained to fight for pay and surrendered his private judgment to the keeping of another. It is even so with the best and most estimable of ministers: he must either abstain from thinking, or he must confine his thoughts within a certain groove. He has to keep his chin in the air and perform a kind of mental goose-step. Sometimes he affects a portentous piety, and becomes "unco guid." If he is too manly and straightforward for this, he works doggedly at his daily routine and comforts himself with the thought that he is not more dishonest than his neighbours.

A soldier who fights for a principle or to defend his home is blameless. He is a patriot and no mercenary: he performs a sacred duty. In like manner he who toils unpaid, like Paul of Tarsus, for the spread of light, may be a helper of Humanity. He is not "ordained" to a traffic in sacred things, and thus he is not tempted to compromise and betrayal of the truth.

When the wolf-races shall have ceased to scourge mankind, then at last the "Sons of God," the Idealists, Plato's *khrusoun genos* (Golden Race), chastened by their sufferings, will understand that to accept payment for a service rendered to a fellow-mortal is to degrade oneself. Is your help needed? then give it freely, and return, like Cincinnatus, to the plough. Has your farm suffered in your absence? you may accept

the amount of your loss: if you take more, you are no better than a brigand.

Where is now the enlightened and progressive Protestantism of Milton? Assuredly not among the Nonconformist denominations. The mantle of Milton has not fallen on them, but his spirit animates such men as T. Carlyle and O. W. Holmes.

"Protestantism (says Carlyle) was a revolt against spiritual sovereignties, popes and much else. English Puritanism, the revolt against earthly sovereignties, was the second act of it. And the enormous French revolution was the third act. Protestantism is the main root from which our whole subsequent European history branches out."

Protestantism, as Carlyle here reminds us, was originally associated with reform and progress. How far has it fallen from its first estate!

We shall indeed be disappointed if we expect too much from Protestantism, for it was never more than a stepping-stone to Rational Religion. It checked the power of the priest, and thus served its purpose for a time. A. J. Fallows points out that many of these Bible-worshipping reformers were tainted with an ignorant and cruel bigotry. For a difference of opinion Calvin ruthlessly burnt Servetus. Luther sided with the oppressors of the poor, he justified serfdom from the Old Testament, and approved the slaughter of the peasantry. The barons and the bishops have been compelled to share their power and wealth

with a gang of politicians, lawyers, financiers, and shopkeepers: but in what respect is society the better? In Germany Protestantism has exalted Bismarck, the coarse and brutal man of "blood and iron." England, the other great Protestant power, has not been ashamed to heap honours on so vile a character as Rhodes. The system of education in all Protestant schools and universities is irrational and materialistic. "Wherever Lutheranism reigns (said Erasmus) there true learning perishes." Matthew Arnold complains with justice that Protestantism is doing its best to make Religion impossible.

As early Judaism stood to the systems of Egypt and Chaldæa; as Christianity stood to later Judaism; as Protestants at the Reformation stood to Romanism; so does the Idealist now stand to Protestantism. Once again in the world's history old things are passing away, and all things—even Religion itself—are becoming new. "All things are shifting, moving, taking a new aspect as we look; something mysterious is working in the world; it is the hand of God" (Lammenais). The Christianity of the Churches is waxing old as doth a garment, and before long it will pass away, as other systems have done. But when one religious system disappears, another and a better one replaces it. Our choice does not lie, as the priest would have us believe, between superstition and atheism, a dismal alternative; but between that form of materialism which he calls

“orthodoxy” and the idealism which he has ever hated and opposed.

*Church* means Assembly of the Lord. The Bishop of Rochester has defined a church as an association for the promotion of righteousness: and there is no fault to find with this definition, inasmuch as it does not involve either sacerdotalism or any other kind of traffic in truth. It follows that a Church may be Buddhist or Christian, Trinitarian or Unitarian, Episcopal or Congregational, Romanist or Anglican, Theistic or Pantheistic. Or it may be named after Wesley, Comte, or Swedenborg. A Church may consist of many people or of few. “Wherever two or three are gathered together” (Matt. xviii. 20) for purposes of religion, there a Church exists. A few ragged wretches praying in a garret, or shouting a hymn in an east-end slum, or a handful of naked Syrian fishermen (it is probable that Peter was stark naked when Christ first found him: see the commentaries on John xxi. 7, and Matt. iv. 18) are as much a Church in God’s sight as ten thousand fashionable people with kid gloves and gilt-edged prayer-books.

Of Christian Churches the oldest and the most corrupt are the Roman and the Greek. The latter has sunk into an Asiatic superstition, and the former is in many countries almost equally degraded. The Roman Church pretends to be “catholic,” and to dictate *urbi et orbi*. Catholic is a Greek word meaning universal. But Romanism

is, thank God, a very long way from being universal, even in Europe. Supposing that it were so, this would not prove its dogmas true. The plague and the cholera are catholic, that is to say, universal; but they may be eradicated by sanitation, just as Romanism disappears in the presence of enlightenment. It is an axiom of science that the lowest organisms are the most widely spread; the same law holds for superstitions. The Bishop of Rome, who is the head of this Church, claims to exercise authority over all men; and so long as he was able he enforced his authority with fire and sword. But a Church can claim authority over its own members alone, that is, over those who accept its doctrines, and over these only with their own consent. This republican doctrine is to be found where we should hardly expect it, in Hooker, "Eccl. Pol." i. 10. It matters nothing to the world at large whether the Bishop of Rome has a direct "apostolic succession" from St Peter or not. We know little and care less about apostolical succession; but we do know that "Romanism is always and everywhere hostile to human progress" (Froude); and we regard with dismay its encroachments upon the once Protestant countries of Europe.

The Anglican Church sometimes puts forward similar pretensions to being "catholic," "apostolic," and so forth. It is particularly absurd for that Church to lay claim to spiritual

authority which owes its existence to the fact that Henry VIII. of England repudiated the authority of the Church. The Anglican Church is some fifteen centuries younger than the Roman. It has been well called by Huxley "an emasculated copy of Romanism," for it has lost much of the vigour and vitality of the older and more respectable superstition. And Ruskin reminds us that "every manner of Protestant written services whatsoever are either insolently altered corruptions or washed-out and ground-down rags and *débris* of the great Romanist collects, litanies, and songs of praise." The Reformation of the sixteenth century, while it saved the world from spiritual bondage, robbed Religion of much beauty and poetry, and therefore of much truth. The unæsthetic barrenness of Protestantism has disgusted many, and caused them to return to the wallow of the older superstition. The Anglican clergy, taking advantage of this reaction, have openly repudiated the Reformation, and become Romanists in everything but name. Nevertheless, the English nation (says Bunyan) dislikes the wares of Rome and her merchandise, and this irrational recrudescence of a spurious sacerdotalism is despised by all educated men.

The Church of England was described by Lord Macaulay as "the servile handmaid of monarchy and the steady enemy of liberty." Lecky, in his "History of Rationalism in Europe," says that

“Anglicanism was from the beginning the most servile and the most efficient agent of tyranny. No other Church so uniformly betrayed and trampled on the liberties of the country. In all those fiery trials through which English liberty has passed since the Reformation, she invariably cast her influence into the scale of tyranny, supported and eulogised every attempt to violate the constitution, and wrote the fearful sentence of eternal condemnation upon the tombs of the martyrs of freedom.”

“‘God said, Let there be light,’ but the decree of the priest is, Let there be darkness! The ignorance of the people has in all ages constituted the strength of the priesthood. For this reason priests and theologians have striven to maintain that ignorance on which their power depends. Their work has been a work of darkness. Formerly when writings and manuscripts were locked up in churches and monasteries, the task of obscurantism was an easy one, for the laity had no knowledge of these things and no access to them. After the invention of printing and the outbreak of the Reformation, the task of those who love darkness became more difficult. It was no longer possible to lock up the sources of knowledge and enlightenment. But by means of their great power and wealth the clergy resisted the emancipation of thought. In these latter days the priesthood carries on the same tactics with amazing cleverness, writing books and utilising the press. Formerly they travestied history; now they misrepresent the events of the hour and control public opinion by intrigue and by



newspapers which they buy up and manipulate. The masses have neither leisure nor opportunity for education; loyal and sincere instructors are few; thus men remain timid, ignorant, credulous and degraded, and are exploited without shame and without mercy" (Count de Renesse).

But the one thing which the priest values above all others and considers vital to his interests, the weapon which he most relies on, is the training of the young. If the clergy or ministers be permitted to control elementary education, directly or indirectly, or to appoint teachers, or to create around children that peculiar "atmosphere" in which their influence can grow; then they have almost all that they require for the enslaving of our souls.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CHURCHES AND SACERDOTALISM—(*continued*)

Clericalism is Antichrist.

"The pestilent distinction between clergy and laity lies at the root of all priestcraft."—Dr ARNOLD of Rugby.

"Out of the light, ye priests, nor fling  
Your cold dark shadows on us longer!"

"Les prêtres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense :  
Notre ignorance fait toute leur science."

"The general judgment of civilised communities has definitely associated clericalism with an anti-social spirit and hostility to intellectual progress."—CANON HENSON.

IN a letter to Longfellow, Russell Lowell has these words :—"Christ has declared war against

the Christianity of the world, and it must cease, there is no help for it. The Church, that great bulwark of practical paganism, must be reformed from foundation to weathercock." Now a reform which begins at the foundation and extends as far as the weathercock will not leave much of the original structure! J. Keir Hardie, M.P., a Nonconformist, considers that "the modern ministry, taken in bulk, occupies the same relation to true Religion as the Scribes and Pharisees did in the days of Christ. This (he adds) is a strong saying, but these are not the times when men can afford to stifle the truth by wrapping it up in soft words or fine phrases."

The "F. D." on our coins testifies that Protestantism at the Reformation, though attacking the Church, claimed, and with justice, the title of *Fidei Defensor*. So in the twentieth century the true "Defender of the Faith" is the man who attacks the worst enemies of all faith, formalism and dogma. "We must not forget that a Church is but a human institution, whereas the family and the State are institutions of Nature and of God" (Canon Freemantle). The Greek, the Roman, and the Anglican Churches, like all other institutions, have their day, and will give place in a brighter future to Longfellow's "Universal Church, deep as is the love of God, and ample as the wants of man."

The English State Church is national only in name, for it is openly rejected by two-thirds of

the nation, and but for the enormous bribe of the worldly advantages which it offers to the self-interested, it would be repudiated by nine-tenths of the population. This is not the opinion of prejudiced outsiders; it is the deliberate conviction of every thoughtful man. Even those who hold Orders in the State Church are compelled to admit that it is rotten to the core. Thus H. R. Haweis ("The Broad Church") says that "the State Church is fast losing its hold upon educated people: intelligent men refuse to take Holy Orders or to attend church." "Verily of the Churches it may be said that they are altogether gone out of the way: there is none that speaks the truth, *no, not one*" (Rev. E. Fowle, Rector of Islip). A volume might easily be filled with similar statements, not by atheists and agnostics, but by ordained clergymen who know the institution which they criticise, and whose interests would prompt them to make the best of it.

"The Church of England was in favour of the alliance with Continental absolutism against constitutional government. It was against the amelioration of the criminal code and in favour of the principle of vengeance as against that of reformation. It was in favour of hanging for almost any offence a man is now fined for at the assizes. It was in favour of the slave-trade and of slavery. It was against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. It was against parliamentary reform and municipal reform. It

was against the commutation of tithes. It was against the repeal of the Corn Laws and the Navigation Laws: it was against free trade generally. It resisted all popular education beyond the simplest elements, and even opposed religious instruction. It objected to public cemeteries and extra-mural interment. Indeed it would be hard to say what improvement the Established Church has not resisted."<sup>1</sup>

To this indictment we may add the fact that "the great lying Church of England," as Carlyle calls it, has approved and encouraged every unrighteous act of aggression, from the earliest times to the present day.

"You are engaged upon the vilest work which it is possible for man to perform. It is not merely that you have diverted from men the source of the water of life, for in that case they might yet find it: but you have poisoned it by your teaching, so that people cannot accept any other religion than that which you have tampered with and perverted" (Tolstoy).

Prosper then, ye priests! Your antics are a mockery of Heaven. The spires of your churches point the finger of derision at the skies. Prosper at the expense of truth and honesty, of progress and purity, until Elijah shall arise and drag you from Carmel down to Kishon!

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, 9th October 1876.

A Church with paid officers must ever do more harm than good, but a State Church tending to become more and more sacerdotal, half-committed to Romanism, repudiated by two-thirds of the people, and scorned by the most educated and enlightened of its own servants, is a danger and a disgrace to the country. To establish or to endow Religion is to ruin Religion : but inasmuch as this Church is established and under the control of Parliament, it concerns every citizen that it should be radically reformed. So long as a given church is established, every citizen is *and must be* a member of it, whether he does or does not accept its dogmas.<sup>1</sup> If you disapprove of a given denomination, you may leave that denomination and join another, but *you cannot leave an established Church*, for it is part of the State to which you belong. Nor have the officers of that Church the power to excommunicate those whom they dislike, as in the Church of Rome or any other dissenting body. In the Roman Church the Pope and bishops are supreme : in each dissenting body the authorities of that body are supreme ; for all these Churches, like the Church of Rome, are free ; and if the members dislike the action of the authorities they can depart. But an established Church is not free, and you cannot leave it without ceasing to be a citizen. Your joining a dissenting body makes no difference whatever. Spurgeon, Martineau, and every Nonconformist

<sup>1</sup> Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity."

in the country, is a member of the Anglican Church, so long as it retains its connection with the State, and its bishops are appointed by the prime minister, and the sovereign is the head of the Church, as at present.

Let us suppose, what experience proves to be false, that a national Church can exist which is not hostile to humanity. Then such a Church must include all men who believe in right and wrong, all who accept the great ideals of justice, mercy, honesty, purity and the like. A government has no more right to exclude any of its citizens from the ministry of an established Church on account of their opinions than to expel them from the school or from the army. If a man is unfit for one honourable post, he cannot properly be appointed to another. Either the ministry of an established Church must be thrown open to all citizens of good character, regardless of creed, or else we must logically enforce the Schism Act of 1713 against unorthodox schoolmasters, and dismiss all "heretics" from the army, as in 1686.

Endowments lie at the root of all this corruption and dishonesty. They have destroyed Religion; they are the bane and curse of education; and they encourage all the most dangerous features of medicalism. In all the learned professions the first condition of reform and progress is the total abolition of endowments.

*Priest* is a shorter form of the Greek word

*presbyter*, which means elder. To be guided by those who have lived longer and had more experience is natural and reasonable. The Latin word *senate* is connected with *sen*, root of *senex* and *senior*; Gaelic, *sean*, aged, elder. In all countries respect for age marks a healthy state of Society in which the cardinal and primitive virtues have not yet been undermined by luxury. Thus the original idea implied by the word "priest" is that of an adviser, teacher, guide of those who are younger and have less experience.

This is a sacred office which devolves upon all as they advance in life. It belongs to every man who has not by misconduct forfeited his rights of citizenship. "Higher task than that of priesthood has been allotted to no man," says Carlyle ("Sartor"). But this task may not be deputed by any man to his neighbour, still less restricted to any special class. By age, by learning, and by character a man becomes "reverend," not by the "imposition of hands." We speak of "taking holy orders," a phrase which testifies to deep corruption and departure from the truth. No man can give "holy orders" to another, for these "orders" are bestowed by God and Nature on every man according to his measure. The priest or teacher, the prophet, philosopher or thinker, the poet or seer (*sacer vates*) cannot be made or unmade by the laying on of hands.

These gifts are common to the human race, even though the multitude may allow them to "fust unused," and those who have them in a high degree will never make a trade of them. "The pastor after God's own heart, who feeds men with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. iii. 15), is not trained in any theological seminary, nor does he receive payment for his work. Like Paul of Tarsus he supports himself by working with his own hands. He teaches, thinks, or writes because he dare not leave his higher faculties unused. But he does not value his services to his fellows at so much per annum. He does not fling himself as a parasite upon society. The labourer of course "is worthy of his hire," and he will surely receive it to the full, but not in cash nor notes, not in this present life.

We must reiterate the principle laid down in the last chapter, a principle outraged by clericalism, that a man who accepts payment for a service rendered to a fellow-mortal degrades himself. The prohibition of usury in the Old Testament is in accordance with this principle; so also are the customs of primitive communities uncontaminated by "civilisation." Of course this and other principles of Idealism are difficult of universal application; but bear in mind that it is one thing to fall short of an ideal through the weakness of human nature, and quite another



thing to build up a social system based on the denial and repudiation of that ideal.

Whether in lower work the specialist does good or harm to himself and others need not be here discussed; but in all higher work specialisation is twin-brother of corruption. One man is skilled in the building of houses or of ships; that is his concern. If his work is bad we may reject it; thus our loss is small. But the higher work, that of the thinker or teacher, is every man's concern. If this man prefers his own interest, or that of his class, to that of society, and thrusts bad work upon us, we are undone; for our whole lives are governed by his thoughts and guided by his teaching. It is dangerous to delegate our highest duties to a special class; it is fatal to entrust the higher teaching to a priest. "Beware (says Lammenais) of those who place themselves between you and God."

As the primitive savage made and used all the implements which he required, and performed his own "ju-ju" or devotions, so when the cycle of human progress shall be completed, each man, freed from the narrowing bonds of specialism, and perfected, will in great measure physically and mentally suffice unto himself.

In chapter xiv. I have shown that the priest, having abdicated his true office of teacher and adviser, became a performer of bloody sacrifices and of magic rites. This monstrous abuse

became possible only when men had ceased to use their own reason, and accepted the guidance of a special class or sacred caste. In order to meet this abuse and to avoid this danger, the reformers of the sixteenth century affirmed, or rather reaffirmed, the doctrine of a universal priesthood. This was the theory of early Christianity, and it was also the teaching of the Stoics, for in almost all points the great Idealists agree.

Of all Christian sects, the Quakers have seen most clearly the danger to humanity from the encroachments of the sacerdotal caste; and the Quakers alone have had the courage to apply the only remedy the case admits. All other Protestants hoped that by getting rid of priests they would abolish priestcraft. But the Quakers had more insight: they were wiser and more philosophical. They saw that a paid minister is but another kind of priest. The interests of Religion are equally betrayed whether some shaveling dictates truth to us, or whether we ourselves dictate it to some wretched man who depends upon our subscriptions for his livelihood.

It may be urged that much good and little harm is done by such a minister as is described by Goldsmith in his *Deserted Village*, or by Goethe in his *Hermann und Dorothea*. But when a principle is violated, the harm is certain, and the good is dearly bought. The

better the clergyman or minister, and the greater his piety, the more surely does he prepare the way for the spiritual bondage of sacerdotalism. It is useless to replace the priest by a clergyman or minister. There can be no safety for society, no hope for humanity except in the abolition of all paid ministers. All else serves only to palliate and so prolong the evil. No flower can bloom beneath the shadow of a poisonous growth: but if the upas tree of clericalism were cut down, Religion would spring up of itself.

The Quaker doctrine of universal priesthood commends itself to the Idealist as altogether rational and true. And this same solution is applicable to some other serious problems that beset us. For instance, if instead of a standing army and a military caste to whom war is ever welcome, every man possessed weapons and knew how to use them, we should have few aggressive wars. Nor would a despotic government be possible; for despotism depends upon the power of the sword being concentrated in the hands of a special body of men, who will support a corrupt government through thick and thin. To combat sacerdotalism every man must be a priest: to resist militarism and despotism every adult male must be a soldier ready to stand, if need be, with the Cromwell of his day. So also to escape the curse of medicalism, every one must know something of the laws of

health and sanitation. In a word, to avoid the blight of specialism, the work of the specialist, which he for his own advantage has involved and complicated, must be simplified and distributed throughout the whole community. A simpler life alone can rid us from the incubus of the classes called "professional," but in reality parasitic.

The vision of a "Church" which shall be rational and cosmopolitan may not be realised in our day and generation: "We see it, but not nigh" (Num. xxiv. 17). Yet it is most rational and reasonable that men who share the same faith should associate themselves together, and should strive to propagate their views of truth. The light of faith cannot be kept under a cask (Matt. v. 15).

"Shall not a body of men acquainted with each other, helping each other to fight, sustaining each other in falls, holding forth to each other the prize of a common victory, be possible once more on earth?" asks Maurice.<sup>1</sup>

"Let combination and brotherhood do for the newer and simpler faith what they did once for the old—let them give it a practical shape, a practical grip on human life!" (Mrs H. Ward).

Of such non-sacerdotal Churches the world

<sup>1</sup> "Lessons of Hope," p. 102.

can never have enough: nor is it possible for their members to be too active and too much in earnest. Probably a religious and cosmopolitan freemasonry will arise, its members known to each other by certain signs and symbols, and cherishing ideals quite incompatible with the existing order; hated therefore by the world, as were the early Christians and the Pythagoreans five hundred years earlier still. This at least is the dream of the present writer.

## CHAPTER XXII

### HERETICS, SCEPTICS, SCHISMATICS, and INFIDELS

I take refuge in the Truth.—Buddhist Formula.

"Orthodoxy is my doxy: heterodoxy is another man's doxy."—

BISHOP WARBURTON.

"The Church has been from early times the most irreligious body in the world . . . parasites of society, betrayers of the New Testament, enemies of civilisation, inveterate poisoners of Truth at its very springs, starvers of freedom, masters of the most guilty hypocrisy the world has ever seen."—Hon. ROLLO RUSSELL in the *Utopian*.

Such are the men who apply the term "heretic" to the friends of Truth!

"WHATEVER the priest likes not, or understands not," says Martin Luther, "that is heresy." Protestantism was a heresy in the sixteenth century, as it is still in the South of

Europe; and now, in the twentieth century, Protestantism, almost worn out, has forgotten its own "heretical" beginnings, and in its turn brands all religious progress as "heresy." Thus it is that those who neglect the passing religious fashion of the hour are accused of heresy, unorthodoxy, latitudinarianism, and so forth. But we need not be "careful to answer in this matter" (Dan. iii. 16), nor should we hesitate to confess with Paul that "we worship God after a way which some men call heresy" (Acts xxiv. 14), "for we have hope toward God so long as our conscience is clear of offence."

The fact of being in a minority cannot possibly affect our salvation, and ought not to disturb our peace. We know that all must sooner or later join the glad chorus of the initiates, *heuron ameinon*; I have found a better way! Why should we not, therefore, pray like Paul, that all men may come to think as we do, and be at the same time more free than we are from the bonds of sin? (Acts xxvi. 29). This is Christ's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come!"—the kingdom of reason and truth.

A noble answer to the charge of heresy was that made by Rogers, a Protestant martyr of the Reformation. "Thou art a heretic!" said the sheriff. "That will be known," replied Rogers, "at the last day." Here was no shuffling and no quibbling.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fox, "Book of Martyrs."

"Heresy" means "choosing." It is clear that if we do not choose our own religion, we must hand over the choice to some one else. In this case we are no better off, for "if we believe things only because the pastor says so, or because the Assembly so determines, the very truth we hold becomes a heresy."<sup>1</sup>

A devout heretic thus communes with the Deity: "Where should I, weak mortal, infinitely minute manifestation of God's infinite life, where should I obtain the courage, the audacity, to break with the beliefs consecrated by ages, unless it be in the firm faith that God is thus seen to be at once more powerful, more beneficent, and nearer to the heart of man than His most fervent worshippers have ever thought."<sup>2</sup>

The word "sceptic" means a person who looks carefully into things. It is obvious that the more important a matter is, the more closely we should examine it. Now, Religion concerns us more deeply than anything else. Therefore it cannot possibly be wrong to be a sceptic. On the contrary, it is the bounden duty of every man to be sceptical in matters of Religion. The theologian may prefer the blindfold believer in his doctrines and dogmas, and he may denounce the sceptic and the heretic; but, fortunately, the safety of our souls is not within his power but in the hands of God.

<sup>1</sup> Milton, "Areopagitica."

<sup>2</sup> Enfantin, "La Vie Éternelle."

“Orthodoxy” means holding correct opinions. But the term “orthodox” is generally applied to persons who profess those doctrines which are fashionable in a given time and place. Thus a man who is orthodox in England is heterodox in France, Spain and Italy, and *vice versâ*. He who concerns himself about orthodoxy or unorthodoxy is little likely to arrive at truth, for he commits the sin of looking to man and to man’s opinion, rather than to God, the only source of truth. With God there is no such thing as orthodoxy and heterodoxy; but there is truth and falsehood. And the true man is known, not by his creed, but by his acts.

“Schism” means “dividing” or “separating.” Each religious body considers those who separate from it as “schismatics.” Thus the Romanist brands the Anglican and all other Protestant sects as schismatical, and the Anglican, in his turn, ludicrous as it may seem, applies the same offensive term to all the Protestant dissenters. But we are not concerned with the sense which bigots may attach to the word.

Schism is not invariably wrong, nor yet is it always right. If a man separates himself from a religious body because his convictions are fundamentally different, he performs a sacred duty. On the other hand, if he deserts his co-religionists on account of some trifling divergence of opinion, he commits a sin, and injures the cause of truth so far as in him lies. He is not



the only schismatic who separates from the popular and fashionable form of Religion. There is a meaner and more cowardly schism, which consists in holding aloof from those whose views we really share, because we do not think it prudent to avow our opinions openly. This is a sin for which it is only too easy to find excuses, but nevertheless it is the sin which assailed Peter, and caused Judas to lose his soul.

After a certain battle in the Thirty Years' War, a captain in the Romanist army, wiping the Protestant blood from his sword, said to a Lutheran prisoner: "I also belong to the reformed religion," and he spoke in Latin for fear of detection. This man is the very model of all those schismatics of the baser sort who stand aloof from the sacred cause of religious progress—a typical "renegade" who denies (*renegat*) or opposes the faith which his conscience and reason tell him to be true.

"Infidel" is another word we often meet in theological books. The word means "unfaithful." A man is an infidel who, having known a higher form of faith, becomes, from interested motives, a pervert to a lower one. If all unworthy motives are absent, the man is no infidel; he is rather to be pitied as one who has lost his way. The Romanist often calls the Protestant an infidel, and the Protestant, with equal absurdity, applies the term to the

Theist or the Unitarian. But calling a man an infidel does not make him one. No man can be an infidel who is faithful to truth.

## THE BLESSED

Who are blest though all deride them ?  
They who trust, O Lord, in Thee :  
Blest are they and none beside them,  
Grace and Truth have made them free.  
Mercy keeps them  
While by Faith Thy hand they see.

'Tis their Faith in Thee that charms them  
Meaner service to forsake :  
Trust in Thee with boldness arms them  
Toil or pain to undertake.  
Hope to please Thee  
Steels them to defy the stake.

—From *Secret Hymns* by Prof. F. W. NEWMAN.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## REFORM AND PROGRESS

Teidh air d'agaidh !

"Vers le jour (light), vers le bleu, vers le vrai, vers le beau, vers l'avenir, vers Dieu!"—VICTOR HUGO.

[Until better conditions are provided for the people] "Our civilisation is naught, our science is naught, *our religion is naught*, and our politics are less than naught—are utterly despicable, are below contempt."—ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE, in "Man's Place in the Universe."

Militarism is an eagle, tearing the vitals of his prey : Clericalism is a vampire, fanning the soul of his victim to sleep : Medicalism is a vulture, gorged with disease and putrefaction : Legalism resembles a harpy, without honour, scruple or conscience : and throughout this desolation of materialism is heard the hoarse cry of the raven whose name is Mammon and Commercialism.

"In our time unpunishable and secret plunders, and in general a readiness to plunder, are to such an extent established among men that in almost all mankind the chief object of life is plunder, moderated only by the mutual strife between the plunderers."—TOLSTOY in "The Overthrow of Hell."—Translation by V. TCHERTKOFF.

GOETHE has well said that every nation and every individual must either advance or recede. To remain at rest is impossible, for Progress is a condition of existence. The law of slow, steady development holds not only for the individual man, but for all human institutions. To arrest the process of *evolution* in Religion or in politics is the surest way to bring about a *revolution*.

"There is nothing so revolutionary (says J. K. Arnold) because there is nothing so un-

natural, and so convulsive to society, as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is by the very law of its creation in eternal progress. And the causes of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption that our business is to preserve and not to improve. It is the ruin of us all alike, individuals, schools and nations."

These words of our greatest schoolmaster are particularly true of Religion; for "if the waters of truth flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition."<sup>1</sup>

The same law of progress holds good throughout Nature, and affords a clue to the origin of the human race. Darwin should have spoken rather of the *ascent* than of the *descent* of man; for it is probable that we have advanced or ascended through countless ages to our present state. If this be the case, may we not expect to advance still further and to ascend still higher? The law of progress is a pledge of immortality.

Mazzini (Essay on Byron and Goethe) says:

"Our earthly life is one phase of the eternal aspiration of the soul towards progress which is our law: ascending in increasing power and purity from the finite towards the infinite, from the real towards the ideal, from that which is to that which is to come."

<sup>1</sup> Milton, "Areopagitica."

Yet progress, unless it be the approach to a higher ideal, is but "the tossing of a troubled sea, which cannot rest, and whose waters cast up mire and dirt." "Be ye therefore perfect" (Matt. v. 48) is the watchword of progress.

True progress is at once material, moral, and spiritual. It is therefore of no avail to gain deeper knowledge of Nature, to have steam for carrier and lightning for messenger, if we do not at the same time advance to a higher code of morals and a more idealistic system of Religion. When we would boast of the progress of the nineteenth century, let us enquire with Disraeli:

"Progress whence and to what? We talk of progress because by an ingenious application of some scientific acquirements we have established a state of society which mistakes comfort for civilisation."

In the United States this so-called progress had reached its utmost development. Here we have a typical instance of what the materialist calls progress. Now the condition of the United States is thus described by the Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance:

"Our churches are growing, our missionary operations are extending, our endowments are swelling, and we congratulate ourselves upon our progress. But we have only to continue making the same kind of progress long enough and *our destruction is sure.*"

In plain English: Protestantism, that is to say, superstitious Bible-worship and the civilisation which is the outcome of that superstition, have failed in America where they have had free scope: and this failure is admitted by those who above all others are interested in concealing the fact. When a religious system is bringing society to *destruction* (this is the word used by the writer quoted above), it is high time to replace it by a better one.

Nor is England far behind in this hellward race. The standard of honour sinks lower and lower. Men have lost all perception of what things are sacred and what things are vile.

"We trace on every hand in art, literature, journalism, public amusements, a rank vulgarity, a frenzied frivolity, a fever of ostentation, a jaundice of cynicism. The spirit of gambling seems to have taken a new lease of life and permeated every fibre of the body politic. Athletics have become a trade, and the interest in them a mania. Wherever the influence of 'smart' or would-be-smart society is felt, the result is enervation and degeneracy."

Theatres, those schools of vice and centres of depravity, are becoming more and more numerous even in provincial towns. All those forces are gaining ground that make for corruption and decay.

"There seems to have come over us a sort

of satiety of civilisation, a hankering for a return to robust barbarism with its reign of force and disregard of moral ties.”<sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer also has lamented what he appropriately calls “the rebarbarisation of society.” “With all our material order (says Canon Barnett) there is moral anarchy. . . . The nation is idolatrous, trusting in the thing seen, not in the unseen principle or Ideal.” By the way, an admirable definition of idolatry.

Our so-called civilisation is a car of Juggernaut on which some ride triumphant, while others are ground to death beneath the wheels. It is the verdict of every man in whose soul there remains a vestige of idealism that, “our social system is a gigantic embodiment of the spirit of Cain” (“Ethics”).

These are the words of Alfred Russell Wallace :

“Compared with our astounding progress in physical science and its practical application, our system of government, of administrative justice, of national education, and our entire social and moral organisation, remain in a state of barbarism.”

“Intellectualism, science, scepticism which has held out such hopes to us, has ended, as it was bound to end, in the frankly confessed and unblushing materialism of all ranks of life. Science has ended, as it was bound to end, in the absence of any altruism to divert it, in giving the rich the power of robbing the poor more completely and less openly than before. For the poor it

<sup>1</sup> Goldwin Smith in “Commonwealth or Empire.”

is no longer a race to become independent, but a scramble to escape the workhouse, and rich and poor alike are losers in all that makes life worth living" (Godfrey Blount).

The condition of England is thus described by F. W. Hayes in "The Story of the Phalanx." No social state in the history of the world ever presented greater abominations, and it is doubtful if such a magnitude of evil was ever previously approached. The nation has enjoyed settled government (of a sort) for nearly a thousand years: every aspect of so-called religious propaganda has had unlimited range of operation: science, learning, art, and literature are within the reach of those concerned in the administration of the State; a century of unparalleled invention and discovery has placed almost limitless mechanical resources in the hands of our artificers. The outcome of all these advantages is a social organism pitiable, despicable, and disastrous beyond description.

At its head is an idle, useless, and mischievous plutocracy, based on the theft of the land, and deriving fabulous wealth from the property which it has stolen from the nation. Next comes a manufacturing class incessantly at war with the workmen upon whose labour its very existence depends, allied with a commercial community from among large sections of which almost the name of honesty has passed away, and whose



richest members represent nothing but plunder or colossal gambling.

Serving these classes, and doing almost all the really useful work in the country, is an immense horde of artisans, of whom a large proportion (thanks to their masters) are ignorant, vicious, and brutal to an extent hardly paralleled in the old world or the new, together with an army of slaves of the desk and counter, doomed to interminable hours of exhausting, servile, and soulless labour, carried on under every species of discomfort and petty tyranny.

Below all these comes a seething residuum of struggling, toiling, starving, and despairing wretches, fighting from childhood to age for a day's fragment of a meal in an atmosphere of drunkenness and vice, obscenity and blasphemy, filth and stench unutterable, with barely sufficient rags to cover their emaciated frames, and sheltered, if at all, like the swine in an overcrowded sty. The result of our commercial system is the steady moral degradation of all the classes engaged in the ignoble occupation of buying cheap and selling dear, of defrauding the public in every stage of purchase or supply.

The chief function of the Established Church is to support the landed interest, the plutocracy and the Tory Government. The dignitaries of the Church are astute men of the world who have played their cards well and know how to be smooth-spoken under equivocal circumstances,

to deal leniently with commercial and political scoundrelism, and in general to make their apostolic status harmonise with a state of society as corrupt and as contemptible as any recorded in history.

The condition of the legal profession is such that etiquette not only permits certain unscrupulous actions, but these iniquities actually become a matter of duty and conscience to those who perpetrate them. The government, representing land-owners, capitalists, the drink trade, the clergy, the army, and the rest, divide themselves into two parties in order to contend for the spoils of office and to hoodwink the public by a spurious appearance of activity. The political wire-pullers in the House of Commons represent every phase of robbery, jobbery, and snobbery which could curse a civilised community. Rich men enter Parliament to protect their riches, adventurers to become rich. Lawyers get themselves elected to push business, to tout for office, and to keep up the lucrative abuses of the courts; railway directors to fleece the public and obstruct their competitors; landlords and the sons of peers to maintain their power and privileges; brewers and public-house owners to oppose any interference with the drink traffic; manufacturers to keep down the labour interest; and wealthy parvenus to obtain a label of respectability.

Truly we have still with us what Sir Thomas More described four hundred years ago as "a

conspiracy of rich men seeking their own advantage under the name and pretext of the Commonwealth." Has not Disraeli called the government of this country "an organised hypocrisy"! Superstition, the harlot, robed in scarlet, sits enthroned. The priests of Baal dance round the golden calf. The din of sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer resounds, and society bows down. The shouts of the mammon-worshippers fill earth and sky, and the air is heavy with the reek of materialism. Brute force is God: success is deified: the typical coarse, bloated face leers and scowls from every point of vantage. Beasts and birds of prey are the chosen and most appropriate symbols of those races whose ferocity and treachery have made them masters of the world.

The ancient Chaldæan cried of the demons whom he dreaded: "They are seven, they are cursed, they are the upholders of thrones." The demons are still seven; to this day they are the upholders of thrones, and their talk is of "law and order." These are the same seven devils which consort with men when, freed from the unclean spirit of sensuality, they walk through the dry places of respectability (Matt. xii. 43). And their names are only too well known:—Clericalism, Militarism, Legalism, Medicalism, Politics, Commercialism, and Education, the humble slave and satellite of Clericalism. Each of these foul fiends assumes the garb of

an angel of light: clericalism dares to insult God by speaking of Religion: militarism appeals to the sacred right of self-defence: and so on for the rest, false and plausible, while preying upon society they pose as benefactors of mankind.

We are hemmed in on every side by imposture and dishonesty:

“Sham honesty which lives on others' labour, sham authority which rests upon violence, sham respectability which is propped up by privilege, sham wealth which is derived from others' poverty, and sham religion which covers the other shams with its threadbare cloak of hypocrisy” (Ernest Crosby).

In a word, the existing social system is especially adapted to produce and to protect a host of parasitic and predatory people. The criminal instincts of the rough, the thief, and the jail-bird will be found on ultimate analysis to be identical with those which produce in the higher classes the priest or minister, the politician, the lawyer, the sweater or slave-driver, and the company promoter. The difference lies mainly in this, that the humbler malefactor is more direct and simple in his methods, and less hypocritical.

Under this cruel burden of parasites and plunderers the mass of the nation is crushed. One-tenth of the nation enjoys one-half of the

total income of the United Kingdom. Of all persons over seventy years old 40 per cent. are permanent paupers. In many country districts every aged labourer is a pauper. In London one adult out of three dies in the workhouse, the hospital, or the lunatic asylum. In some elementary schools close on three-quarters of the children are diseased. For all but a fraction of the nation life is one long slavery, and this world is an *ergastulum*.

If this social disease, these evils, were stationary, or if they were increasing but slowly, we might hope that the partial remedies, the palliatives with which some folk amuse themselves and quiet their consciences, might be of some avail. But the mischief has been increasing of late years with alarming rapidity. In England, while agriculture is stationary or declining, priests are more numerous in the last decade by 20 per cent., actors by over 50 per cent., and the other parasitic classes in like proportion. Within the memory of men now living 60 per cent. of the population of Germany was agricultural; now this percentage is reduced to 35, an almost incredibly rapid change for the worse. And while the vitality of the race is ebbing thus, the expenditure on armaments increases and goes up by millions.

The indictment of the existing social system contained in this chapter is condensed from an enormous amount of evidence. Almost the

whole of it, whether included in quotation-marks or not, is taken from writers who have made a special study of the subject. Those who are most conversant with the facts and who are farthest removed from materialism, will be the last to suggest that this picture of our Babylonish civilisation is overdrawn. Indeed, there are dark aspects of modern life which we have not even ventured to hint at. The statements here made are from sources which are open to all readers of the daily papers. In addition to the authorities cited above, the reader may refer to the following pamphlets, in some of which he will find mention of more exhaustive works on the same subject.

Some of these writers are pledged to the popular superstitions, and the reforms which they advocate are utterly inadequate. Others blindly grope after a reconstruction which is not based upon Religion. Nevertheless, they all agree in condemnation of the existing order :

“The Overthrow of Hell,” by Tolstoy.

“The Old Order and the New,” by Morrison Davidson. An excellent book, though perhaps certain allusions to the sex question are not quite satisfactory. The chapter on Usury is particularly valuable.

“The Social Doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount,” by Canon Gore.

“The Labour Church,” by Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed, M.A.

“Socialism and the Teaching of Christ,” by Rev. John Clifford, M.A., D.D. Contains a bibliography of Christian Socialism.

“Christian Socialism,” by Rev. W. Tuckwell, M.A.

"Slavery, Ancient and Modern," by John C. Kenworthy.

"The Economic Upas-tree," by H. Ancketill.

"Jesus the Socialist," by Rev. D. Hird, late Rector of Eastnor.

"The New Conscience," by H. D. Lloyd.

"Society Classified," by Canon Girdlestone.

"John Bull, Esq.," by Elihu. Contains a number of diagrams illustrating the social state of the country.

"The Ethics of Social Reform," by M. Adams.

"Christ in London," by Rev. R. C. Fillingham, Vicar of Hexton.

"Christ and Socialism," by Dean Stubbs.

"Merrie England," by Blatchford.

Well known to all students of social questions are such works as those of Charles Booth, F.R.S., and C. Rowntree, a Quaker manufacturer of York.

## IN THE TWILIGHT

*By the kind permission of the author*

(Isa. xxi. 11-12)

Now fades God's sunlight from the Land ; its gold  
In darkness dies. Dimly in the gloom  
Truth's altar fires burn low ; as corpse in tomb  
Conscience is dumb : and Tyranny is bold.  
Justice and Right condemned as fictions old.  
What saith the Watchman ? Cometh Dawn or Doom ?  
Oh, Light and Love Ineffable ! from Whom—  
Piercing each sceptic cloud so dense and cold,—  
Comes to each watcher of Thy purple East  
Some gleaming promise of the Golden Day ;  
May all Thy Seers hold this faith at least,—  
"Not Sun from Earth, but Earth from Sun, away  
Has darkly turned ; yet, with our gloom increased,  
Comes nearer still the dawn for which we pray."

—CHARLES POCOCK.

## CHAPTER XXIV

REFORM AND PROGRESS—(*continued*)

“Der Mensch hofft immer Verbesserung.”—SCHILLER.

Woe unto those who are satisfied with Egypt and at home in Babylon !

“On peut se demander si la civilisation est un bien ou un mal.”  
—GUIZOT, “Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe.”

“What are all reforms, restorations, victories of truths, but protests of a minority ; efforts, clogged and incomplete, of the good and brave, just enough in their own day to stop instant ruin, the appointed means to save what is to be saved, but in themselves failures ? Good men work and suffer, and bad men enjoy their labours and spoil them. A step is made in advance ; evil rolled back and kept in check for a while, only to return perhaps the stronger. But thus, and thus only, is truth passed on, and the world preserved from utter corruption.”

—DEAN CHURCH.

AGAINST these terrible evils mankind rebels at intervals. And each revolt, while it aims in the first instance mainly at the reform of abuses in Religion, is in reality a blow struck at that organised conspiracy which those who profit by it call by the high-sounding name of civilisation. Each of these reformations marks an advance in human development, the completion of a cycle of progress. First, Javeh strove with Baal, Zion with Babylon, Israel with Canaan. This was the earliest stage of religious reform : not the first in the history of the world, but the first that we have knowledge of. For the “chosen people,” that tribe of Arab fanatics,



were the Protestants of their day, and it is suspected by recent writers that Abraham exiled himself from the Euphrates valley because his soul rebelled against the superstitions of a degraded polytheism.<sup>1</sup> The next great period was that in which Christ strove with Zeus for the empire of men's minds. Paganism, that is the beautiful and poetical polytheism of Greece, takes the place of the Babylonian Sabaeism, and Christianity is substituted for the older Judaism. The combatants have altered, but the contest is the same. Progress, uncouth and vigorous, still grapples with the polished and venerable past.

At the Reformation of the sixteenth century the cycle had come round once more. The despised and struggling sect had grown and spread and risen to power and dignity. Abuses had crept in: corruption was at work. A new reform was needed. For the third time the struggle was renewed. A hundred thousand victims were writhing in the flames or groaning in the dungeon. But Protestantism prevailed. The rack and torture, the midnight massacre, the Spanish armament, the secret plot, all failed to check the "Lutheran heresy."

Surely at length the goal is reached: true Religion is established; superstition has hidden its head. Far from it! Once more reaction is challenged by reform, and the fourth cycle of

<sup>1</sup> Z. Ragozin, "Chaldæa."

human progress has commenced. Once more "times of revival" (Acts iii. 19) have come. The star of a new and higher dispensation shines brightly in the heavens, though the prophet has not yet appeared at whose feet we must lay our offerings. Many are the "shepherds keeping watch," as of old, for truth and progress; and the light which they have seen is that of a day more glorious than any which has gone before. The dispensation which they herald will differ as essentially from Protestantism as that does now from Romanism; and it will draw to itself all those who are weary of formalism and heavy-laden with the burden of superstition.

Reform and Progress are indissolubly connected with Religion. There can be no true Religion without the spirit of reform, and conversely no reform can avail unless it is based upon Religion. The idealism of a great teacher becomes rapidly corrupted, the truth which he proclaimed is soon overgrown with formalism and falsehood.

The first downward step was taken very early in the history of Christianity. We may say that the new Religion was stung by an ichneumon-fly in the larval stage. The appointment of paid officers, superintendents, overseers, "episcopoi," was a fatal mistake, for these men soon developed into bishops. The paid preacher of truth is ever a traitor to truth. It cannot be otherwise, for when the inevitable contest arises

between truth and self-interest, he flees "because he is a hireling."

It is more than probable that the second great disaster which overtook Christianity, viz. its alliance with the State, was the direct result of the appointment of these "episcopoi" or paid officers. For this alliance would naturally increase the power and importance of these men, and it would be their direct interest to betray the young and vigorous organisation by handing it over to the Government. If any profit is to be made out of a new movement, or if a comfortable position of any sort is to be secured, there are always a number of sharp-witted persons ready to fasten themselves like parasites upon it. The "episcopoi" formed the nucleus of a priesthood; and thus

"Out of the teaching of the most sternly anti-sacerdotal prophet who ever inaugurated a new Religion has been built up among the Romanists and their imitators in the Church of England, the most pretentious and oppressive priesthood that ever weighed down the enterprise and the energy of the human mind" (W. Rathbone Greg).

**Theologians** (says the same writer) **have transformed the pure precepts of Jesus into a Religion as nearly as possible their opposite**, and they decree that whoever will not accept their travesty shall perish everlastingly! It is the old spectacle that so disturbed Jeremiah reproduced in our own days: "A

wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land, the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule through their means, and the people love to have it so, and what shall be the end thereof?" Truly reform and progress are sore needed to avert darker days than the world has yet seen.

The idealist dreams of a Religion which shall be, what Christianity never can be, cosmopolitan. Romanism prevails mainly among the southern races, and partakes of their good and their bad qualities. It is imaginative, emotional, poetical, but it has become hopelessly corrupt, tainting the moral and spiritual life of its adherents. Protestantism was developed among the Teutonic and Scandinavian races, and like these northern peoples it is intellectual and practical, but harsh, unattractive, and materialistic. The climate of each region reacts upon the creed of its inhabitants. Thus Protestantism assumes a harder, narrower aspect in the bleak mountains of Switzerland and Scotland; Romanism takes its most degraded form in the enervating climate of tropical America.

But the different races of mankind are mingling to an extent that has never before been possible in the history of the world. And there is an interchange of ideas not only between the warmer and the less favoured districts of Europe, but between Europe and the remotest regions of Asia. Yes, and the distant past is yielding

up to us the treasures of its mystic thought. It would indeed be strange if from these new conditions, these great opportunities of enlightenment, these mighty workings of the human mind, there did not arise a grand and universal system of Religion, marked by no peculiarities of race, narrowed by no national prejudice, and warped by no influence of climate.

As in society there are three stages: first, the family; next, the clan, sept, tribe, or race; thirdly, the era dawning now when men shall be cosmopolite, when the barriers of nationality shall be broken down, and there shall be for all humanity one citizenship, one country from pole to tropic, one people from the busy Atlantic eastward and westward to the Pacific with its girdle of fire. So also there are in Religion three stages which roughly correspond to these: first, the fetish or idol-worship of the lowest races and the least developed intellects; secondly, the various forms of polytheism, including Christianity, partial and imperfect views of truth arising from a partial and imperfect knowledge of Nature and the laws of Nature; and lastly, the glorious idealism to which human thought is tending.

We look for a Religion which shall combine as in a focus the deep truths foreshadowed by the symbolism of Egypt and of Chaldæa, the poetry of the Hindoo and the philosophy of Greece, the enthusiasm of the Kelt and the Slav, and the practical wisdom of the Roman

and the Teuton. The stern monotheism of the Hebrews will blend with milder forms of faith, while progress and culture will no longer be excluded from our creeds. The prophet of Galilee will be better understood, and consequently more beloved, for instead of making him the corner-stone of a mass of dogma, we shall at last make some attempt to realise that human brotherhood which he preached.

We are waiting for a "universal revelation which will be what ecclesiastical systems, what philosophical liberalism, has failed to be—the **assertion of a humanity in which all nations are equally partakers.**" These noble words of Maurice betray a consciousness that all our present revelations are partial and tribal, not universal and cosmopolitan.

A Religion which would embrace all mankind must be truly "catholic" or universal in its sympathies, not narrow and exclusive. The Jews and other monotheists will never accept the dogmas of Christianity, nor is there the smallest chance, fortunately, of the three great Christian Churches uniting to enslave human thought. In other words, Christianity is not, and can never be, "catholic."

When a truly universal faith shall arise, then, "not till then, will terminate man's infancy"; not till then will Religion as the word implies (*religat religio*) bind all men together in the bond of brotherhood so that humanity at last will own

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). "Tous auront au ciel un Dieu, et une patrie sur la terre" (Lammenais). So Seneca prays, "Patriam meam esse mundum sciam, et praesides Deos." Then when the fiery enthusiasm which a higher faith alone can inspire shall have melted away our miserable prejudices of race and creed, our motto will no longer be "Dieu et mon droit," strange mixture of religion and egotism, but "God and Humanity." This is the millennium of which men dream; thus alone can the Golden Age be partially restored.

Christianity has brought no millennium. We have indeed, as Lessing says, made no serious effort to put its teaching into practice. Nor will a Religion higher far than Christianity make this world a paradise, no, not even if each individual should carry out its teaching to the uttermost. But we may hope with Mazzini that a new dispensation, though unable to reach the level at which it aims, may realise some at least of the ideals of that which is now passing away. To doubt this would be to despair of human progress.

Many ideals must ever remain unrealised; and those philosophers are over-sanguine who imagine that any schemes or systems will avail to lift from humanity its load of misery. The angel with flaming sword (Gen. iii. 24) stands between us and the garden. Every event of life, each

fact of history, reminds us that here "we have no continuing city" (Heb. xiii. 14), and that this world "is not our rest" (Micah ii. 10).

Whether the Religion of which we dream will possess any outward organisation we cannot tell. But it will certainly not support a hierarchy of priests, an army of paid ministers or paid lecturers, or any sort of social parasites. We know not what body the new spirit will assume; but we rejoice that a reformation is at hand—

"When the refuges of falsehood  
Shall be swept away in wrath,  
And the churches with their idols  
Shall be shaken to the earth."—WHITTIER.

We look for a Religion which shall be based upon the study of Nature, illumined by reason, and rooted in the heart and conscience, a Religion which shall govern the whole of life, which shall be identified with reform and progress, and shall work for the welfare of mankind.

## CHAPTER XXV

### UNITARIANS

"Awake, thou that sleepest."—EPH. v. 14.

THE only Christian sects which deserve attention from the point of view of Rational Religion are the Unitarians and the Quakers. I wish that it were possible to say anything in favour of



the Unitarian system; but on the other hand, it would be unreasonable to ignore a denomination which has afforded a friendly refuge to many earnest souls beginning to grope their way towards the daylight.

Unitarians have no fixed creed. Their system is a compromise between orthodoxy and Theism; and the orthodox element has, unfortunately, sufficient strength to paralyse the organism and rob it of all progressive energy. We find among Unitarians high character, some symptoms of enlightenment, and much kindly tolerance. "Of all sects (says Mrs Lynn Linton) that go by the name of Christian, Unitarianism gives the most Religion with the least dogma." Nevertheless to those who are connected with Unitarianism by parentage and by ties of friendship, and who regard it as an honour to be associated with the denomination, it is painful to be compelled to admit that it retains all the limitations of a Protestant sect.

The vital and essential parts of Religion are replaced by morality and theology. An idolatrous Bible-worship prevails, as among the other dissenters; the "paper pope" still rules the reason and the conscience. Public prayers and services, those universal narcotics of the soul, still provide occupation for a paid ministry. Idealism is absent, and a veil of Biblical mythology conceals the void. Extempore prayer, that amazing accomplishment so dear to the hearts of Non-

conformists, is largely cultivated; and each minister pours out "sermons," that is to say, moral essays (for the most part extremely well written), at the rate of two per week. What have all these things to do with Religion? Overtaken by the vanguard of the Congregationalists, left far behind by the broad-Churchmen, separated from orthodoxy by some utterly unimportant theological quibbles, it is impossible to understand why these people do not worship in the parish church.

When will Unitarians cast aside the last rags of superstition? When will they shake off the control of well-to-do commercial materialism, and undertake the task, not yet begun, of founding a Religion which shall satisfy the soul of man? A new synthesis is needed, a complete break with mediævalism. Martineau, while in the beauty of his character he reproduces the saintliness of the early Christian type, belonged essentially by the constitution of his mind to the ages that are past. His definition of Religion as "a personal affection of transcendent reverence and trust towards a higher personality" is artificial, unreal, empty, and impotent, a mere string of sounding words, *vox et præterea nihil*. On this hollow foundation nothing of value can be built. The Theism implied by this definition is divorced from Nature and unconnected with the service of Humanity. For this double reason it cannot be accepted as the basis of a Rational Religion.

The truth must be told that the whole Unitarian system is based on an abject bibliolatry. Thus in the training college of the denomination a student who may not have read a page of Ruskin or a line of Goethe must waste three years upon Hebrew; he must listen to ten dreary lectures on the pedigree of James, and twenty more dismal dissertations on the authorship of Romans. Not more futile and fatuous is the education of the Romanist priest; not more grotesquely irrational is the training of the Angekok or the Ju-Ju man!

The reforms aimed at by Unitarians are unpractical and purely theological. Certain irrational dogmas are repudiated, but the existing social system is not condemned: no protest is made against that *danse macabre* which goes by the name of civilisation: no new ideals are evolved. Quite hopeless indeed is Unitarianism as a system; yet are individual Unitarians a proof of how great a gain is even partial emancipation from the popular superstitions; for the most upright characters, the most estimable men and women one meets with in the course of one's life, belong to this denomination.

The idealist will find much to approve in the following statement by Stopford A. Brooke, the eloquent preacher and well-known English scholar:

"I believe in the *Sovereignty of God*, in His omnipotence, and in His presence in the whole

physical and spiritual universe. I believe in His life being the only means by which any thing or any being lives: but I wholly deny that His sovereignty is limited, as it is if any beings of any kind [Devils] exist independent of His goodness or His love, which are the very roots of His sovereignty. The existence then of eternal evil or of eternal death is impossible; for both of them are limits to the goodness and the life of God.

“I believe in the *Fatherhood of God* over all creatures that have being: and I believe that Fatherhood to be perfect in goodness and love; and that it is wholly unlimited—as illimitable as He is Himself—and every doctrine of any Religion which imposes any limit whatever on the Fatherhood (and terribly numerous and cruel are such doctrines) I believe to be absolutely false.

“I believe in the doctrine of the *Incarnation* of God in Man, and therefore in Jesus Christ, my Master, in whom that truth is most clearly seen, and by whom it was most vividly declared. But I believe that doctrine has no limitations. It is not only in Jesus Christ that God is incarnate, that He takes being, that His word is spoken and His life seen, but in every spirit, even in the lowest and most degraded that has come into conscious being.

“I believe in the *Atonement*, as it is called; that is, I believe that the sacrifice for the sake of love of all selfish desires in behalf of the blessedness of others (which blessedness consists in their becoming righteous and loving), and in behalf of all those truths which make the progress of

the soul of man, is the only means of salvation with which we are acquainted, the only way of redeeming man. But I believe in that also without limitations. It is not only Jesus who redeems by loving and by kindling love, who reconciles man to God by bringing them to believe that God is Love, and by making them at one with God when they love. He does not stand alone, save in the pre-eminence of his love. Every soul of man or woman who loves, and lives and dies for love, is a redeemer, a saviour, and an atoner.

“And now, why shall I speak any further of other doctrines? Of the great church of God, of the resurrection, of immortal life, of the judgment—for if we make these previous ones of which I have spoken without limitation, we must see that these also have universal and illimitable works and ends.”

Mr Stopford Brooke, to his great credit, has left the State Church. What shall we say of the candour, honour, honesty of those (many hundreds) who, holding similar opinions, still support (and are supported by) the Church? A fig for the shuffling spirituality which takes no account of common honesty!

The following statement is by a recent convert from Rome who has found his way out from the darkness of orthodoxy into the light of a higher faith :

“After long and anxious thought and study I have arrived at the conviction that the Jewish

and Christian scriptures, though possessing many excellencies, are full of legendary and mythological statements: that the Roman Catholic Church has no claim to be regarded as a divinely constituted authority: that the papacy is a human institution gravely compromised to error and superstition, and therefore injurious to the spiritual and temporal welfare of mankind: that Jesus Christ, though a holy man and an ardent reformer, was not the great God of the universe, but son of Joseph and Mary: that neither demoniacal spirits nor a place or state of everlasting torment have any existence in fact. With these convictions it will be dishonest for me to continue as a priest teaching the pure Theism of a natural and spiritual Religion which I profoundly believe and desire to promote."

Another recent convert to Unitarianism, formerly Romanist priest, and writer in the Catholic dictionary, characterises some of the orthodox doctrines as "appalling and blasphemous superstitions."

As an antidote to Calvin's "Five Points," the five strongholds of the Philistines, the following pentacle can be heartily recommended. Two alterations have been made as indicated by italics:

- i. Fatherhood of God.
  - ii. Brotherhood of Man.
  - iii. Leadership of *the Great and Good*.
  - iv. Salvation by character.
  - v. *Reform* and progress, here and hereafter.
- (Freeman Clark, a Unitarian writer.)

These extracts show Unitarianism at its best. But it will be noted that the humanitarian element in Religion counts for nothing, while Nature-worship is utterly ignored. Thus two out of the three great Revelations of God are denied. There is something very unattractive about this barren and mutilated variety of Theism.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE QUAKERS

"Follow the Inner Light, and it will lead you to that Central Flame which illumines the interior life of every human being."

"The Quaker religion is something which it is impossible to over-praise. In a day of shams it was a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel truth than men had ever known in England."—Professor W. JAMES, "Varieties of Religious Experience."

"The religion which approaches the nearest to true Deism [Theism] in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers."—THOMAS PAINE, "Age of Reason."

IN many particulars the Quakers approach nearer to Rational Religion than any other Christian sect. Thus they are honourably distinguished by their zeal for education. When Joseph Lancaster started his system of teaching the poor at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he was not only ahead of his age, but was bitterly opposed by the bishops and clergy of the Established Church. Although his

scheme was perfectly unsectarian, the benevolent Quaker was denounced in the most unmeasured terms as "irreligious and antichristian."

Secondly, the Quaker religion has ever been intensely humanistic. This was well seen in the anti-slavery struggle in America when Whittier and Garrison worked hand in hand. Again, the salutary example which they set of simplicity in dress is of great value in an age of luxury and ostentation.

All this is cordially to be approved by the idealist. But by far the most important part of the Quaker message to Humanity is their protest against sacerdotalism and militarism. Indeed the value of this protest can hardly be exaggerated, for clericalism and the military caste, allied as they are always and everywhere with despotism, are by far the most dangerous of the corruptions which war against society. Humanity is ever threatened by a monster whose head is the priest and whose claws are the standing army. Against this combination of fraud and force mankind is helpless and struggles vainly like Laocoon.

When England was driven to revolt against the political and religious despotism of the Stuarts, encouraged and supported by the Episcopal Church, the friends of liberty and progress supposed that they could frustrate the sacerdotal conspiracy by substituting presbyters or ministers for priests. But Fox and his comrades were more far-sighted



and more philosophical. They realised that "new Presbyter is but old Priest writ large," they saw that our only safety lies in the total abolition of the ministerial office. And to their infinite credit they solved this momentous problem not in a destructive manner but constructively. They proclaimed the glorious doctrine of a universal priesthood: a doctrine familiar to the earliest Christians and also essential to the idealism of Epictetus.

And with wonderful insight they perceived that in order to realise this grand reform, the monopoly of knowledge and learning must be wrested from the priesthood. The laity must be educated and enlightened in order that they may be fitted to resume the sacred office which the priest had usurped. Hence the Quaker zeal for education to which I have alluded.

The biblical doctrine held by evangelical Christians is this: that every believer is "Prophet, Priest, and King," "Would to God," said Moses, "that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." John (Rev. i. 6, and v. 10) claims that all who accept the higher teaching of Christ are Kings and Priests. In other words, the Idealist, he who is animated by the Spirit of Epictetus or Christ, who obeys as they did the higher law of his nature, the inward law of Conscience, Reason, Intuition, and Charity, that man, and that man only, becomes a law unto

himself, and requires no Prophet to admonish, no Priest to instruct, and no King to coerce him. As the soul becomes perfected and weaned from sin, outward is gradually replaced by inward control. In this sense, and in this sense only, can we accept the dictum of Protagoras : *pantōn metron anthrōpos*.

Let not the materialist suppose that this doctrine can be dismissed as a piece of high-flown sentiment peculiar to Christianity, and to other Eastern religious systems ; for this is also the teaching of the Stoics, whom no one has ever accused of exaggerating the mystic element in Religion. *Rex eris si recte facies* : if your conduct and your character are kingly, that is to say, if you rule yourself, then you are a *King* ; if Conscience and Reason are your inward guides, you are a *Priest* ; if the divine intuition of harmony and beauty be not dead within you, if the fire of love be not extinguished, then you are also in your measure and degree a *Prophet*.

The Quaker doctrine of a universal priesthood is both biblical and rational : it is the only antidote to the poison of sacerdotalism. How much evil has resulted in all ages to mankind from the appointment of a special class to stand as teachers and preachers between man and God. Not only do we wrong ourselves by seeking Religion where it can never be found outside of our own hearts, but we place these men in

a false position and expose them to a great, an irresistible temptation. For it becomes their interest, it is to them an absolute necessity, to keep mankind in tutelage, to prolong our babyhood, to render perpetual the infancy of the soul. All preachers, teachers, or writers who live by their preaching, or who derive any worldly benefit from it, must be disregarded by him who would find the path of life. There are no mercenaries in the army of truth, no hirelings among the good shepherds of the flock.

Putting aside those exceptions which prove the rule, we may take it for granted that the value of a man's message to the world is in inverse ratio to the amount of credit or advantage which he obtains by it during his lifetime. Luther and Wycliffe escaped destruction : Tolstoy has not yet been murdered by the Russian Government : but for one prophet who escapes, a hundred are done to death. We hear it said that the days of martyrdom are past. Vile materialism ! Wherever there is honesty and earnestness there is martyrdom, though it may not take the sensational form of being tied to the stake and burned alive. And conversely, where martyrdom is absent, we may infer that honesty and earnestness are also wanting. The pursuit of Truth cannot be reconciled with ten per cent. and the pleasant places of this world are not for teachers of Idealism, nor yet for those who attempt to put those teachings into practice.

One more step was needed in order to complete

the religious reform thus inaugurated. And here again the Quakers did not fail. As we thread our way through the Cretan labyrinth of life, we require some clue, some guidance, some control. Having repudiated the *outward* control and guidance of priest and minister, it became necessary to place the soul under the higher guidance of the "*Inward Light*." This appeal to the Reason, Conscience, and Intuition of the individual is the crowning glory of the Quaker system, the very corner-stone of the temple of Truth.

Archbishop Parker had frankly stated the fundamental doctrine of sacerdotalism, that "Private persons have no right to judge, they are not masters of their own actions." The only possible reply to this arrogant assumption is to assert the divine authority of the Light Within, the Inward Evidence, as it is called by Matthew Arnold, "Literature and Dogma," chap. vi.; the internal evidence on which Jesus insisted (Luke xvii. 21); to claim that every devout man may rightly wear the Urim and Thummim of Light and Truth (Exod. xxviii. 30, and 1 Esdras v. 40). It is indeed most interesting to note that Matthew Arnold, far removed though he was from the Quaker standpoint, accepted the doctrine of the Inner Light and traced it back to Christ.

Dr Herrmann, Professor of Theology in the University of Marburg, has pointed out ("Faith and Morals") the only way in which Protestantism can be reconciled with Rational Religion, viz. :

by accepting with its logical consequences the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light.

“He shows the weakness of the Protestant position which confounds faith with a belief in the credibility of the Bible and its narratives and doctrines. He points out that such a faith is in reality a Romanist faith. It differs from Romanism only as a half from the whole. Nevertheless faith does involve submission to an authoritative revelation : but this revelation is an internal one, made directly to the soul of man.”

The inward revelation exists potentially in all men, but lives only in those who have given up “the world, the flesh, and the devil,” who live a simple life in close contact with Nature, and who are not entangled in the conventions and the falsehoods of society.

We cannot wonder that orthodoxy and the powers of darkness and absolutism were alarmed at a reform so far-sighted and so complete. The harmless god-fearing Quakers were reviled and persecuted ; they were even accused of “impiety and blasphemy.” And lest the truths which they held should permeate society at large and so endanger the power and influence of the parasitic classes, the “Friends,” as they called themselves were excluded from the learned professions and compelled to confine their energies to commerce. By this means national religious reform, the cardinal reform on which all others hang, was

crushed, and State-supported sacerdotalism continues to darken the land.

Nevertheless, the Quaker ideal must prevail, for it is the goal to which the highest thought is tending: an educated and enlightened community, guided by reason and conscience, and seeking to please God not by ritual observances but by the strenuous service of mankind.

It is not my purpose here to give a complete account of the Quaker system, nor yet to enumerate the great and good men who have adorned the denomination, but rather to point out that this sect has in some particulars come very near to Truth, and has many elements in common with Idealism.

But while we recognise the supreme importance of the Quaker teaching on Clericalism, Militarism, and the "Inner Light"; while we affirm that these three cardinal doctrines are essential to the progress of Humanity: we claim that they must be so understood as to square with Rational Religion. Thus the protest against war is valid, is vital, in as far as it refers to standing armies, to aggression—in a word, to militarism. But we must refuse to abdicate the sacred right of self-defence. This right is made the pretext for all kinds of wickedness, nevertheless the fact remains that it is inherent in every living creature as a primary condition of existence. Should the Athenians submit tamely to the eastern despotism of Xerxes? Was Cromwell wrong when he rid

his country of a tyrant? Must we blame the North American colonists or the South African farmers for resisting the arrogance and rapacity of Great Britain?

A righteous man may surrender his own personal rights for the sake of peace, but others have claims upon him which he cannot repudiate, if he would retain his self-respect. The weak and the oppressed may call to him for help. If the cultivator of the oasis gives up, as is sometimes the case, four-fifths of his produce to the truculent nomads who live idly on his toil, we say that he is mild and long-suffering. But if rather than take the sword he abandons his daughters to these tyrants, we call him a craven. Let us thank God for mighty deliverers such as Cromwell and Garibaldi and Tell. We have needed these heroes in the past: we may require them in the future. To deny the right of self-defence is to give a free hand to oppression and to invite destruction. Even the timid antelope, when driven to bay, will impale the lion on his pointed horns; and it is probable that the harmless chamois would be rapidly exterminated by the wolf if it were not for the formidable hooked weapon on his head.

“If we are attacked, if our country is invaded, if our existence is at stake, it is our duty to defend and preserve ourselves: but in every other light and from every other cause is war inglorious and detestable” (Thomas Paine).

This orb is poised in space between the planets Venus and Mars, which symbolise two fundamental and interacting laws of life. Venus is the power which ensures the continuance of the race: a lower law which may not be eliminated, but which must be subordinated to the higher law of purity. Mars is the contrary force which limits the teeming increase of individuals, destroying all that is degraded and corrupt: a force from which there is no escape, but which must be restrained and governed by the ideals of righteousness and justice.

In an address issued by the "Religious Society of Friends" at the yearly meeting, June 1900, it was shown with ability and with true spiritual insight that to protest against war is both incomplete and futile unless we protest also against the commercial greed that leads to war, for "it is the desire to get and to keep that breeds quarrels." The author of this admirable pamphlet, taught by the Spirit of Truth, warns us that "the keen warfare of relentless industrial competition"—commercialism, in a word—is more cruel, more sinful, more degrading than militarism or the warfare of the sword. "It is useless (he concludes) to denounce war while we worship dividends."

Again, the Quaker protest against sacerdotalism must not be taken as a condemnation of symbolic teaching which has no necessary connection with priestcraft. To reject symbolism because of its superstitious abuse would be as illogical as to



hold iron accursed because that metal has been used in the construction of an infernal machine.

Finally, the doctrine of the "Inner Light," if rightly understood, is incompatible with the worship of the "Paper Pope." The freedom of the Spirit brooks not the bondage of books and Bibles. To be rid of priestly domination is a glorious deliverance; but the emancipation of the soul is not complete so long as Truth and Right are sought without instead of being learned within. The Quaker teaching failed to regenerate society at large partly because the opposing mass of ignorance and materialism was too strong, but in great measure also because this teaching was not carried to its logical conclusion. The infallible book which Quakers retain is as grievous a hindrance to the higher life as the infallible Church which they reject. Bibliolatry is apostasy from God and Truth, and they are not the only idolaters who worship a graven image. An "idol volume" may replace the idol carved in stone.

Quakers are discarding, wisely perhaps, all peculiarities of dress and speech, for these things are not essential. Let them, as they value progress and enlightenment, discard also a narrowing and paralysing Bible-worship; let them learn from Goethe "to acknowledge God not only in the writings of the past, but wheresoever and howsoever He may reveal Himself."

Now that persecution is disarmed, and that many members of the "Society of Friends" have attained to a full measure of worldly prosperity, will they remain true to their ideals, or will they stand aside and allow others to continue the struggle which they began against the forces of ignorance and reaction? I would urge them in all friendliness to bear in mind that in order to be worthy of their traditions they must not rest satisfied with repeating the outworn political and religious dogmas of the past. They must, if they wish to be consistent, deal with the problems of to-day in the same devout and fearless spirit which animated their ancestors. Thus sings Whittier, the Quaker poet :

"Hold fast your Puritan heritage,  
But let the free-thought of the age  
Its light and hope and sweetness add  
To the stern faith the fathers had."

## CHAPTER XXVII

### POSITIVISM AND ETHICS

"He who denies God destroys man's nobility."—BACON.

Are you an atheist? Then prove by your conduct towards man and beast that Bacon is wrong, and the theist will welcome you as a brother.

As substitutes for the decaying superstitions of Christendom many religious systems have been proposed, some of them rational, others even less so than the "orthodox" sects. It is obviously

impossible for a busy man to examine all these systems: even the student could hardly find time to do so. But indeed it will be sufficient to apply certain practical tests. If these preliminary enquiries give satisfactory results, it becomes our duty to make a closer examination, otherwise the proposed system need not detain us longer.

A sensible man will consciously or unconsciously apply some such tests as the following:—

- i. A religious system must be free from superstition.
- ii. Its principles must be simple and intelligible to all persons of average capacity.
- iii. Its teaching on the practical questions of life must satisfy the heart and conscience.

Now Positivism and the Ethical Society claim our attention as manifestly satisfying the first of our three tests: they are both entirely free from superstition. The second test postulates simplicity: for a religious system must address itself to all, not merely to the select few whose minds are highly cultivated. “Beware (says Allanson Picton) beware of merging religion in an intellectual system.” A Religion stands self-condemned which requires for its comprehension a life of learned leisure. The Ethical Society also will do well to bear in mind this warning. As for the system of Auguste Comte, it completely fails to satisfy this test. S. Laing (“Modern Science and Modern Thought”) says that Positivism is “difficult to understand.” I

suppose that Mr Laing, though he falls a long way short of idealism, may be regarded as a person of average capacity!

The smallest compendium of Positivist doctrines runs to over four hundred pages of what the adepts themselves admit to be "heavy reading." Before we force our way into this jungle we would like to be quite certain that there is something inside which the open country does not furnish!

We come now to the third preliminary test, and here we regret to find that both the systems under examination fail conspicuously. Neither Positivism nor the Ethical Societies have, as far as I am aware, made any public protest against the diabolical wickedness of vivisection, the disgusting practice of inoculation, and the other abominations of medicalism. We are compelled, therefore, to repudiate both these systems because they are both deeply tainted with scientific materialism. In many other practical questions the same lack of idealism, the same alienation from Nature, is betrayed by both these systems: but this one flagrant instance more than suffices to condemn them.

It is perfectly reasonable for a plain man to apply a plain test to any religious system which is proposed for his acceptance. Will any one contend that it is necessary to read through the whole "revelation" of Brigham Young? If we are convinced that polygamy is inferior as a sexual system to monogamy, mormonism is con-

demned by our third test, and we have done with it. Similarly, if we believe that dreams and visions are subjective rather than objective phenomena, the first test here proposed will make it unnecessary for us to peruse the works of Swedenborg, unless it be as a matter of curiosity.

*With positivism as a philosophical system we are not concerned.* We are not discussing philosophical systems. In another chapter I have cited the opinion of those who hold that Religion is independent of metaphysics and philosophy. Rational Religion is based on the fundamental attributes of the soul: Conscience, or sense of duty; Reason, or sense of truth; Intuition, or sense of abstract beauty; Love, or sense of kinship. Below and behind all these lies the Will. By these powers of the soul we are enabled to apprehend and strive after certain ideals. This constitutes Religion: this is absolutely simple, and does not need the support or sanction of any philosophical system. Positivism interests us just so far as it is a practical guide of life, a religion in fact, no further. If you are searching for a practical Religion be not turned aside nor entangled by empty words. Choose that lamp which gives the best light. Positivism is frankly atheistic. "God is not necessary to us," says Comte in a letter to Sarah Austin; and being a consistent and logical system, it denies not only the Spirit in Nature but the soul in Man.<sup>1</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> Lafitte's Catechism: so also the larger one by Haggard.

speaking of worshipping Humanity is an abuse of language; but if the expression has any meaning it must denote some complicated sort of wholesale and indiscriminating idolatry.

The Positivist supposes that by rejecting the theistic hypothesis he reaches firm ground, and stands upon a foundation that cannot be shaken. If he possessed more insight, he would realise that justice and mercy, honesty and purity, and the other ideals which he accepts are in no wise more certain, more positive, more free from doubt than the central theory which he repudiates as unproved. One negation does but pave the way for another, and those who shun the arrogance of dogmatism must beware lest they fall into the arrogance of denial.

As for the Ethical people, they have published a dismal collection of hymns from which every allusion to God and immortality is carefully excluded. But this theoretical atheism need not trouble us in the least. It is a natural reaction from the orthodox anthropomorphism. There is an atheism of the heart which is infinitely worse. That man who is idealist in life and conduct is, in spite of himself, a theist; and as such we accept him, yes, even though he should blaspheme. For the idealist is on the road to theism, but the materialist, orthodox or heretic, has denied God in his heart. The man who refuses to say, "Lord, Lord" may be to all practical intents and purposes a theist. If he

holds aloof from the fellowship of theists, we regret it; but we for our part do not repudiate him, although his denials may and must grate upon our feelings.

Positivism is founded upon Romanism, which it imitates even in matters of detail. And through Romanism it has received from the ancient cosmic religions of the East a large body of fundamental truth. This body of truth, originally derived from Nature, needs to be revitalised by renewed contact with Nature, otherwise it is but hearsay as it were. Here it is that Comte falls short. His powerful and logical intellect was narrow withal, nor did he go direct to Nature for his inspiration.

Not in the study or on the boulevard can the highest truths be learned. Seated under a plane tree by the rocky banks of Ilissus, Plato's characters discuss the deep problems of existence. In front lies Ægina, beyond are the highlands of Arcadia. From yon breezy cliff the nymph Orithya was carried off by Boreas. Hard by is an altar to the great god Pan. The air is laden with the perfume of the Vitex Agnus-castus. The music of the cicada peals and pulsates from above. In the progress of his discourse the speaker is (in Plato's words) "entranced by the genius of the spot." Comte is not among the number of those seers who thus lose their individuality under the spell of abstract beauty and become merged in the divine. As far as Reason

can penetrate he leads the way ; but Plato (in spite of his disgusting vices) discerned truths that were hidden from Comte, for the Athenian sage, more poet than philosopher, came nearer to the heart of Nature.

In certain passages of his "Religion et Religions" Victor Hugo, though he falls far short of Comte's omniscience, conducts us to the confines of a region unknown to the most encyclopædic of the Comtist sect. For a sect it is, and a sect it will remain, until it receives from some inspired mind a breath of that divine madness which it lacks.

Positivism, though it fails to satisfy the idealist, must be admitted to rank as a rational religious system : a system, moreover, which rests upon the rock. "Vivre pour autrui. Ordre et progrès. La famille, la patrie, l'humanité," this is the essence of Religion. For Comte has singled out among many ideals that which is supreme, that which most needs to be affirmed, that which is best suited to form the corner-stone of the temple of Truth. Of course this great ideal of Fraternity and the service of Humanity was common to Epictetus, to Christ, and to the higher religions of antiquity ; yet Comte deserves credit for re-affirming it in the teeth of a social system which is based upon its absolute negation.

So strong is Comte's aversion to Idealism that he exalts Paul above Christ, and Aristotle above both Socrates and Plato. Christ is not included



in the Positivist list of "558 worthies." Nowhere indeed is Comte's materialism more conspicuously betrayed than in the construction of his Calendar. The idea of replacing the Romanist "saints" by a list of the real benefactors of mankind has much to recommend it. A true attitude towards humanity must obviously involve both reverence for ancestors and respect for the interests of posterity. But many of Comte's worthies depart as far from the ideal of manhood and womanhood as do the "saints" whom they supplant. Most of the world's best and greatest are inconspicuous and unknown. *Lathe biōsas* was their motto. For greatness, in the popular acceptance of the word, is too often achieved by a certain elasticity of conscience, by an unscrupulous adaptation of the mind and character to the evil spirit of the time in which we live. It would not be difficult to show that many of Comte's "great" ones have no claim on our reverence, and that others whose claim is paramount have been omitted. The martyrs of the Reformation, whom Comte treats with contempt, have done more for humanity than the crowd of materialists whom this learned Frenchman delights to honour.

Better, because more natural and inevitable, was the French Republican Calendar of 1793. Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest: such are the things on which our earthly life depends, these are the primary divisions of the year. To attach to the months of the year the

names of certain men, Julius (July) or Archimedes, or whoever it may be, is a purely artificial and arbitrary arrangement. To number the years from the date of Comte is to invite and to deserve ridicule. Not to Auguste Comte has it been given to supplant the Galilean, to discredit the Stoics, and to extinguish the light of Idealism. From the point of view of Idealism the greatest *certain* event in the world's history is the death of Socrates. This is the cardinal point from which our years should date, if any alteration were desirable. It is probable that a teacher of sublime genius and piety lived in Palestine some four hundred years later than Socrates, and it is likely enough that, inasmuch as he was a religious reformer, he fell a victim to the fury of the priesthood. But there is no certainty about the details of his life or of his death. Indeed Tertullian and Justin Martyr believed that Christ lived to a good old age.

Comte's classification of the sciences is not accepted without reserve by such authorities as Huxley and A. R. Wallace; but when suitably amended it is likely to have important bearings on education.

The government based on brute force which Positivists advocate is but a low conception, and implies a profound unfaith in human nature. Such government is always with us; we have too much of it already. "Vi et fraude" is the motto on which almost every government has

acted. Comte accepts the first half; but the second must follow. Who says force says fraud; you cannot separate the two.

Comte's teaching on the sex question has much in common with that of Idealism, and contrasts very favourably with the low theories of certain socialist writers.

By making his system turn upon a single ideal Comte has obtained a rigid iron-bound definiteness which does not answer to the many-sided nature of man. The passion for exact definition produced in the Christian Church ill-will, dissension, strife, and hatred; and so it must ever be. The reader of the interesting and learned articles in the *Positivist Review* is no less struck by the ability and the genuine, if somewhat ponderous, piety of the writers, than by their uniform lack of insight and imagination. Obviously the system attracts and can attract only those minds which are cast in the same mould and confined by the same limitations as that of Auguste Comte himself. Comte was, after all, but a theologian without theology: he was unaware that in matters of religion absolute certainty is absolute untruth.

Positivism would foist upon us "a body of moral and intellectual teachers depending for support upon those who accept their teaching" (T. H. Bridges).

May heaven forbid! We know them only too well, these "moral and intellectual teachers," and

the manœuvres on which they "depend for their support." We abhor these social parasites, whether they come smelling of whisky like the Irish soggarth, or Bible-mongering like the Methodist minister; whether they are clad in feathers like More's Utopian hierarchy, or arrayed in a brand-new scientific suit of Comtist cut. "Fil di lino t'inquieta? Io te l'cambio in fil di seta." Do those flaxen fetters chafe you? Try these silken handcuffs on. *Epaino!* A positivist priesthood might become as great a curse to humanity as the Roman, the Greek, or the Anglican. Far nobler is the Quaker ideal of an educated and enlightened community, self-governing and free from clerical control.

Littré, George Eliot, and some others among Comte's most illustrious disciples accepted Positivism as a philosophy, but not as a religion. That is to say, the system fails, in the opinion of those who have studied it most attentively, when applied to the practical matters of everyday life. It follows that, whatever interest it has for the student, Positivism may be disregarded by practical men.

There are those who do not take the French philosopher quite seriously. Far be it from me to make light of what is somewhat heavy; but it would be idle to deny that here and there Democritus, *si foret in terris rideret*. How shall we repress a smile when Ireland, poor old Ireland! is handed over to a "triumvirate of

capitalists"? When the crowned harp on the green flag of Erin is replaced by the portraits of Carnegie, Vanderbilt, and Moses, and for "Eire go bragh" we must read "ten per cent."!

In one respect Positivism is to be preferred to the "Ethical" system. Its verdict on the great events of the day has been more righteous and consistent. Thus in that great national crisis when the government of this country made a cowardly attack on the liberties of the two South African republics, orthodoxy (as might be expected) applauded and blessed the iniquity; the Nonconformists showed the same infamous spirit of worldliness; the Quakers wavered; the Unitarians, to their disgrace, were for the most part apathetic or half-hearted; "Ethics" made no sign, overpowered by a contemptible dread of the popular fury; but the Positivists spoke out with passionate earnestness on the side of righteousness and justice.

I wish to repeat that *with Positivism as a philosophical system I am not concerned*, but viewed as a Religion, it contains, as I have said, elements of the utmost importance. Thus Comte's "Law of the Three Stages" breaks the fetters of Theology and of Metaphysics. But it must be remarked that those who have never known the bondage of theology and of metaphysics have naturally no need of this deliverance.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

## SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

"A society leavened with Christian leaven would be in the true sense a Socialist society."—BISHOP OF ROCHESTER'S Charge to his Clergy.

In other words: If we had anything that could be called Religion (which is not the case), the objects of Socialism would be attained, as far as they are feasible.

"Peuple, il ne suffit plus de la force et du nombre: Pour vaincre il faut l'idée" (you need Idealism).—GASTON CRÉMIEUX, Martyr of Liberty.

"Only in looking heavenward, not in looking earthward, does what we can call Union, Mutual Love, Society, begin to be possible."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

That is to say: The essence of Socialism is Co-operation: Co-operation depends upon Fraternity: Fraternity cannot exist without Religion; and the first step towards Religion is to get rid of the popular superstitions.

SOCIALISM asserts that existing institutions are hopelessly corrupt, and that a radical reconstitution of society is imperatively needed. Every thoughtful man will agree that this is the case. In the next place, socialists trace these evils to unbridled competition. Here again we find ourselves in agreement; for it is obvious that most, if not all, existing abuses have the following origin: individuals, blinded by the struggle for existence and by egotism, have preferred their private interest before that of the community. Socialism is right, therefore, about the

nature and the cause of the evils that afflict society.

As a remedy Socialism proposes certain legislative measures. Many of these have our cordial approval. In this respect also a rational man will be to some extent a socialist. But there are two points on which Idealism parts company with English Socialism. Firstly, we disapprove the sordid motive of self-interest to which socialists appeal; secondly, we affirm that **social and political must be based upon religious reform**, for in the words of Carlyle: "The spiritual is the beginning of the temporal; the spiritual will always body itself forth in the temporal history of men."

Against a spurious civilisation based upon self-interest Socialism appeals to self-interest. This is casting out devils by Beelzebub! The appeal must be made to principles such as justice and mercy; those ideals must be reaffirmed which are violated by our so-called civilisation. Idealism, or in other words, Religion, is the only antidote to self-interest and the evils which it brings. If you appeal against an abuse to the self-interest of those who suffer from this abuse, you cannot even hope to enlist the whole of these victims on your side; for some among them will, and always do, calculate that they can serve their own private and personal ends best by making terms with that abuse, and

actually working for the injustice which oppresses their neighbours. You have no right to reprove these fellows for their treachery; you have appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar you must go. But if your appeal is made to nobler motives, to those ideals which constitute Religion and which are the concern of every man, you may hope to win over not only those who are crushed by a particular abuse but all those men everywhere whose souls are not insensible to higher things.

Socialists would give the go-by to Religion; they imagine that reform and progress can be dissociated from Idealism. Vain hope! There can be no reform without Religion, and conversely no Religion without reform. These men are not far-sighted, nor are they as practical as they suppose. Their materialism has been rebuked not only by Carlyle (whom I have just quoted), but by many other enlightened and progressive thinkers. Dr Arnold has these words: "Anything would be better than a national society formed for no other than physical ends, acknowledging no power greater than its own, and no law higher than its own enactments." Maurice has the same warning: "Any reconstruction of society which has not as its basis the doctrine that all things are of God will be but the reproduction of all ancient corruptions and abuses." Mazzini insisted that reform and progress must not be dissociated



from Religion. His watchword was "God and Humanity." "The name of God (he says) must be inscribed upon our banner." His essays are full of passages to the same effect; thus "Politics and Religion are inseparable." Mazzini saw what English socialists fail to understand, "the necessity of investing the European republican apostolate with a religious character" ("Faith and the Future"). In the same essay he has these remarkable words: "*The great problem of the day is a religious problem, to which all other questions are but secondary.*" Not until Socialism accepts this vital truth can the idealist permit himself to be identified with it. Mazzini was a profound and noble thinker, and his thoughts command our respectful attention because he was no mere theoriser but a man who endured the uttermost privation and hardship in the cause of human progress.

Before leaving this important point I will cite one more authority to the same effect, an authority whose words should weigh with socialists, namely Henry George. In his "Social Problems" he reminds us that reform "must stretch out beyond self-interest, either of the few or of the many; it must seek justice, *it must be animated with the religious sentiment.*"

Herbert Spencer favours "individualism," and it is usually taken for granted that this view of life precludes Socialism. On the contrary,

the more clearly we see that individualism or self-interest and the competition which it begets are laws of Nature, the more we shall feel the necessity for something which can hold these laws in check, and mitigate the severity of their action. It is absolutely unnecessary to proclaim the doctrine of individualism, for it is deeply rooted in our nature. Great need there is, however, of affirming with Kropotkin ("Mutual Aid") that "sociability, solidarity, mutual aid is as much a law of Nature as internecine struggle"; and again that "unbridled individualism is a modern development, and not the primitive condition of society."

There is no fear that Socialism will ever get rid of competition, because competition is a condition of existence, a condition to which both animals and plants are subject. If socialists aim at abolishing competition and suppressing individualism, they dream of something that is quite chimerical. But in as far as they desire to emphasise the higher law of love and mutual help, and to assert its supremacy over the lower law of internecine competition, they desire the thing which all good men have ever longed and worked for.

But this blessed consummation, this curbing of the cruelty of competition, this return of the Golden Age, cannot be compassed by any law or Act of Parliament. It may be realised only by obedience to that idealism which English

socialists repudiate and deny. And the first step to Idealism is the enlightenment of those now sitting in darkness, and the uprooting of the popular superstitions.

It is one thing to restrain and limit the action of the lower laws that govern our nature; it is another and a most irrational thing to talk of suppressing these laws. Individualism is well able to take care of itself, and competition is a law which cannot be evaded. When a man proclaims himself an individualist, he simply means that he repudiates all systems, theories, and ideals which hamper him in making the most of this world and taking the utmost advantage of all those who are weaker or less unscrupulous than himself. As a theory of life individualism stands condemned, because it contradicts the primary axiom of Idealism that "action based on the principle of human fellowship is the only action that is essentially good."

The Rev. P. Dearmer, M.A.,<sup>1</sup> identifies individualism with original sin! Indeed, with all deference to Herbert Spencer, it is impossible to separate individualism from that selfish anti-social spirit which lies at the root of all corruptions and abuses. For does it not imply the denial of fraternity, the supreme ideal? The demon in Goethe's *Faust* is "the Spirit that ever denies," and this is his cardinal nega-

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Socialism," p. 10.

tion. It requires but little insight to realise that individualism is a disintegrating force.

Individualism has ever been the very test and touch-stone of materialism. Again and again Epictetus flings in the face of Epicurus his anti-social teaching. Time after time he reiterates the same reproach. For with unerring insight the great champion of idealism perceived that the most essential elements in Religion are fellowship, fraternity, and the service of Humanity.

Socialism seeks to improve the condition of the masses by removing privileges and abuses, by ensuring a more reasonable reward for labour, by reducing the hours of toil, and in many other ways. It aims also at introducing a more simple, natural, and healthy mode of life in society at large, at diminishing luxury and ostentation, and at bridging over, as far as possible, the gaps which at present separate the wealthy from the poor.

The socialist dreams of a millennium when war and misery shall be no more, when selfishness shall cease and laws shall be superfluous, where

" Each heart  
Self-governed, the vast family of love,  
Raised from the common earth by common toil,  
Enjoys the equal produce."—COLERIDGE.

Socialism is working, in fact, for a reconstruction of society in which the last remnants of feudalism

and mediævalism shall disappear, when human progress shall no longer be impeded by the prejudices and by the endowments of the past, when human life and happiness shall be less at the mercy of absolute power or boundless wealth, and where that courage and disciplined energy which we now devote to war shall be directed rather to winning greater boons from Nature than to wresting from each other the gifts of God.

The socialist looks forward to a better time when

“ The wretched many shall be  
Less far removed from all that glads the sense,  
From all that softens or ennobles man.”

All these aims and objects are excellent, and all must unite in striving for them. But they will not be obtained by any spontaneous efforts of the blind, helpless masses: these blessings will be won, so far as we can ever win them, by the devotion and the suffering of single individuals. I repeat that about the end which Socialism aims at, no dispute is possible: but we know of no means by which to compass such an end, unless it be Idealism, which the socialist leaves altogether out of his account.

If Socialism be regarded merely as a scheme of legislation for the betterment of certain classes, it resolves itself into a struggle for material advantage between employers and employed, a fight between the “haves” and the “have nots.”

This aspect of the question does not interest us, for we are concerned not with details but with principles, and we are tempted to exclaim: "Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth!" But if, on the other hand, Socialism should appeal to us as an attempt to realise the supreme ideal of Fraternity, then we should have to regard it as one half of our Religion, for it would be identified with the pursuit of those public ideals which enter into our definition of Religion.

The striving after brotherhood has marked every religious revival. Among the early Christians it took the form of a crude and simple-minded communism (Matt. xix. 21; and Acts ii. 44, 45). Whatever form it may take, be assured that if it be genuine it will involve self-sacrifice. Only the fervour and enthusiasm inspired by Religion can have this result. We read that the earliest unions were religious.<sup>1</sup> No other unions are possible to man, no other fraternity or socialism than that which is based upon Religion. "Only in looking heavenward, not in looking earthward, does what we can call Union, Mutual Love, Society, begin to be possible" (Carlyle).

Existing religious systems are intensely hostile to Socialism, because they are ruled by a parasitic class of priests, parsons, and ministers, whose interest is irreconcilable with reform and progress.

<sup>1</sup> Fyffe, "History of Greece."

So long as this class of men exists, so long will it be hopeless to attempt reforms in politics, education, law, morals, even in medicine; for Religion governs, and ought to govern, all these things, and Religion itself is in bondage. Let me repeat and reiterate that, apart from a radical and fundamental religious reform, no other reform is possible. To attack any abuse while Religion remains unregenerate is but to strike at the tail of the hydra. Sacerdotalism forms the head, the brain, of the monster with which we have to deal.

I am aware that there is a variety of Socialism, "Christian," that is to say clerical Socialism, on which the priest has smiled, and which must therefore be viewed with extreme suspicion by honest folk. *Foenum habet in cornu!* Can socialists be so irrational as to suppose that any sort of superstition is compatible with human progress? Can they be simple enough to imagine that priest, parson, or minister will join a progressive movement with any other intention than to turn it to their own account?

Finally, there are one or two minor points on which Idealism is not at one with Socialism. Thus socialists talk much about "democracy"; but the word has no meaning for those who own the higher formula "Humanity." Democracy is the watchword of those materialists who suppose that if a certain party could be placed in power, and if certain laws were passed, a sort of millennium

would result. He who realises the unity of all mankind in God can neither pledge himself to any political party nor side with any social clique. The everlasting principles of right and truth, the bright and far distant vision of human brotherhood, these things are not the special concern of high or low, of rich or poor. The class distinctions of this country or of that, the claims of caste, do not exist for us, because we acknowledge but two classes of men, those who intrigue for their own advantage, and those who labour for the common weal.

Among the early Christians there were vices which we find reprov'd in several passages of the New Testament. Among socialists also at the present day similar disorders occur. It is to be regretted that men of such high character and noble ideals as William Morris and Grant Allen should advocate (as did Plato) a low theory of the sex question. This is playing into the hands of the priest, who delights to pose as the guardian of purity. Much darker shadows hang over Walt Whitman and a section of his admirers. But these things are not peculiar to Socialism; they are far commoner among the supporters of the established order. If scandals occur among reformers, they afford opportunity for malignant comment, and do incalculable injury to the cause of progress. If socialists do not openly repudiate the immoral teachings of Morris and Grant Allen, of Bax and Quelch, they make it impossible for an



Idealist to be identified with their propaganda. Will you dethrone Mammon and set Priapus on the empty pedestal?

Lastly, though Socialism rightly aims at the suppression of artificial inequalities, it will never be able, even if it were willing, to create a still more unnatural equality. The standard of Progress will ever be seized and carried to the front by the firm hand and fearless heart; the feeble and cautious ones will ever linger in the rear. On the togas of some citizens Nature herself will always weave the purple laticlave.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THEISM

God is Life.

Quidquid non Deus est nihil est.

“I in one God believe,  
One sole eternal Godhead, by whose love  
All heaven is moved.”—DANTE.

“The Theistic hypothesis is the only one which can carry the facts of Natural Beauty.”—Rev. R. S. TYRWHITT, M.A., Rector of Mary Magdalene Church, Oxford.

“Idealism is the necessary basis of Theism.”—H. RASHDALL, in “Contentio Veritatis,” by Six Oxford Tutors.

In other words, a true Religion is the only possible foundation for a true Philosophy. It is of the utmost importance to note the connection between Idealism and Theism: also that the path to Theism lies through Idealism, not *vice versâ*.

WE have defined Religion (Chapter III.) as the attempt to realise ideals in public and in private

life, and especially the supreme ideal fraternity which involves the service of mankind. This is primary, fundamental, essential, and it is sufficient for the multitude. But the few who have leisure, inclination, aptitude: the student, the scholar whose nature impels him to look below the surface, to search out the hidden causes of things, *rerum cognoscere causas*; these men will ever seek an answer to the riddle of the universe. Some, if not all, thinkers will find this answer in theism, for they will believe that the ideals on which their attention is fixed are, as it were, beams of light which radiate from Deity.

Theism is the theory of the Great and Good, of the Galilean enthusiast, of the Athenian sage who calmly drained the hemlock, of Aurelius the divine, of Epictetus the master. But bear in mind that Religion is not a theory, nor is it confined to the few who are qualified for the special study of sacred things. On the contrary, Religion is real, vital, and intensely practical. He is not a theist who says, "I believe in God." This formula is reiterated with rank and blatant blasphemy, Sunday after Sunday, by a huge chorus of a hundred thousand atheists. He is a theist who attempts to follow the ideals which converge in God. He may not know, or care, to what goal idealism leads: he may crave no higher approval than that of his own heart, and dread no other censure than that of his own conscience: yet for all that he is

truly and essentially a theist. Work your hardest in the vineyard, and the less time you spend saying "Lord, Lord," the better.

Religion may be regarded as a plant of which the root is morality and the flower is theism. See to it that the root and stem are healthy: trouble not about the flower, that will take care of itself. Or again, recurring to the time-honoured similitude of an upward pilgrimage: morality guides us past the swamps and jungles that beset the base of the mountain; Religion leads us onward by grassy slope and rocky path, by pine-wood and precipice, through all the upland region where man may live and work: theism is the snow-clad summit. Hence come the streams that fertilise the land, but here no man may dwell. Theism is the "high mountain apart" (Matt. xvii. 1) on which no tabernacles may be built. Those who talk most glibly about the glory of these glittering peaks are they who have never set foot upon the mountain, who have viewed them only from afar, being entangled among the pestilent jungles of the plain.

Epictetus the master warns us emphatically that recondite doctrines are not essential to Religion. When the men of southern temperament and pre-Aryan race shall have purged their souls of sensuality; when the northern peoples and the so-called Aryan races shall have unlearned that intense selfishness and innate brutality which makes them the scourge of humanity:

then, not till then, will it be worth while to meditate upon the deeper truths to which Idealism forms the introduction and the vestibule. Did not Christ warn us against throwing pearls before swine? And will you sound harmonies for howling wolves?

Before you enquire into theism and the hidden mysteries of philosophy, see to it that you are able to make a satisfactory answer to each of these four questions:—

First, what are your capacities for art, music, mathematics, science, language? Do you suppose that if any one of these faculties is imperfectly developed, the higher faculties, reason and intuition, will not be correspondingly weak? Under the Mosaic dispensation no man with a physical blemish might be a priest. Is a mental defect of less or of far greater import? It is possible that Professor Newman's reasonings against the immortality of the soul may depend on a weakness of intuition which must be correlated with the imperfect development of some primary faculty: in this instance perhaps that of music and the sense of harmony. A theological work which is the delight of orthodoxy and the comfort of the credulous is due to the halting intelligence of an author who is abjectly incapable of comprehending the rudiments of plane geometry!

Secondly, how much time and study have you devoted to the meditation of abstract questions? Have you, "neglecting worldly ends, been dedi-

cated to closeness and the bettering of your mind?"<sup>1</sup> Have you lived like Christ "in the wilderness," that is to say, alone with Nature, or are you always jostling in the crowd? This warning will not be thought superfluous by those who have heard an evangelical preacher boast: "I lived to the age of fifty without a serious thought!" Are you under the delusion that it is easier to attain to the divine wisdom than to amass a fortune or to become an authority on some point of science? Nay, but it is infinitely harder, and demands more time and toil.

Thirdly, what efforts have you made to bring your character and daily life into harmony with the doctrines of idealism? If your life and your theories clash too much, what will be the value of the latter?

Lastly, what sacrifices have you made for the "pearl of great price"? Have you been trying to acquire this jewel on the cheap? Do you fondly imagine that wealth, social position or advantage of any sort is compatible with the search for truth? Can a man find truth while he is searching for money? You may not actually make a trade of truth like the priest, parson, or minister, but in as far as you derive any credit of any sort from speaking or writing about sacred things, you are a traitor to truth. If you are unable to answer each of these four questions to the satisfaction of your conscience, then it becomes

<sup>1</sup> "Tempest," i. 2.

your duty to leave the deeper problems alone, and to confine your attention to honesty, sincerity, purity, justice, and mercy, to those ideals in fact which are within your reach. These things constitute Religion: they are essential, and they are sufficient for the salvation of your soul. Philosophy, theology, is not essential; and unless it be the outcome of practical religion, it is worse than worthless.

As morality forms the foundation of Religion, so Religion itself is preliminary to Theism. In other words, Theism is complementary to Religion. The axiom that "God must be known before He can be served" is false; it is one of those plausible fallacies on which the accursed fabric of sacerdotalism is built up. We must reverse it and read "*Prius Deum colere quam nosse*"; he who does God's will, who obeys the precepts of Idealism, shall know the higher doctrine (John vii. 17). Obedience comes first and fits the mind to understand the theory. "*Homme, veux tu trouver le vrai? cherche le juste*" (Victor Hugo). "Truth would you find? then seek out justice first." "No one can have a true idea of right until he does it" (Martineau).

When we speak of Theism, we do not imply any enquiry into the nature of the Deity. He who writes "*De natura deorum*" cannot be acquitted of presumption. "From all philosophising about God let us pray to be delivered; it removes Him far from us, it prevents us feeling

His presence," says George Dawson. It is not necessary for our usefulness in life or for our happiness here or hereafter, that we should think correctly, or that we should even think at all, about these deep questions. "Beware of inquiring into matters which are beyond your ken; strive rather that you may obtain a place among the humblest of those who obey the laws of God."<sup>1</sup>

The theism of Rational Religion has nothing to do with "the absolute, the infinite and the unconditioned," phantom triad of negations that guard the portals of Atheism. "Une négation est un sinistre abri." Our theism is not built upon the *ego* and the *non ego*; nor yet on Descarte's magic formula, *cogito, ergo sum*. When will men desist from the futile attempt to scale the sky with ladders of logic? When shall we cease from constructing those Babel towers of thought which strew with mouldering ruins the dismal plains of Shinar? There is and can be no mathematical certainty in matters of philosophy. Theism is a hypothesis which every thinker must accept or reject according to the constitution of his mind. It is not touched by any argument, and he who seeks to prove the existence of a Deity is as rash and as presumptuous as he is who tries to demonstrate the opposite. "We have as little fellowship with the atheist who says that there is no God as with those theists

<sup>1</sup> "Imitatio": so also Socrates in "Xenophon," Mem. i. 1-10.

who profess to know all that is in the mind of God" (Prof. Tyndall).

**"Any one who tries to deduce from the abstractions of metaphysics a scheme of natural religion will fall into self-contradiction and stultification"** ("Faith and Conduct").

"The God of metaphysics is but an idea, but the Maker of Heaven and Earth [the Spirit of Nature], the Sovereign Judge of actions and of thoughts [God revealed in Conscience], is a power" (Joubert).

Maurice says: "The difficulty of all difficulties is to believe in a living and true God who loves his creatures. It is a difficulty which no argument can remove, which the progress of ages does not diminish, and which is often most overpowering in the most religious men."

But this difficulty is in great measure the result of our presumptuous attempts to express in words the nature of the Deity, and it is enormously increased by those superstitious dogmas from which theists are emancipated. The French writer quoted above has this wise remark: "It is not difficult to know God, provided that we make no attempt to define Him."

"Could we conceive Him, God He could not be:  
A God alone can comprehend a God."—YOUNG.

This is no place for our little formulæ. To the loftier souls among the Hebrews of old,



God was "the High and Mighty One inhabiting eternity." And this expression is permissible simply because it is pure poetry. Let it suffice for us that to usward **God is Life**. "*Dieu est la Vie Éternelle*" (Enfantin). So Paul, "We live in God" (Acts xvii. 38). The "I AM" of Exodus iii. 14 can bear no other meaning. There is great comfort in this thought, for drawing near to God by Idealism we are drawing near to life. A man who cannot see the sun is blind; but he who fixes his eyes upon the sun will lose his sight. Similarly the thinker who attempts to fasten his thoughts upon the Deity is either mad, or must become so. Let us cease to hanker after a logical certainty which the great sages of the world have never reached, but which they would long since have attained, if it had been attainable. Let us seek God, not in the wordy labyrinths of metaphysics, but in contact with Nature, in obedience to Conscience, in the service of Mankind, for this is the triple revelation.

A clergyman said to me: "I would take children into a dark place, and whisper to them the name of God." Quite so, the darkness suits your methods. But the idealist on the contrary would lead children out into the broad daylight of Heaven and speak to them of truth and justice, of purity and mercy. Set thus upon the path which leads to God, they would be assured of finding Him without any assistance from the caliginous whisperings of the priest.

It is necessary to remark that Theism must not be made a pretext for public services or prayers, or for a parasitic life. A man who lives out of Theism can not be a theist, any more than he who gets a living by Christianity or philanthropy can be a Christian, or he who is supported by reform a reformer. The one thing by which a man earns his bread is invariably that which he degrades. It is easy for a man to be honest on every question excepting the one which touches his pocket.

## CHAPTER XXX

### PANTHEISM

"Christianity and Pantheism must be reconciled, otherwise it will be the worse for Christianity."—Rev. JOHN HUNT, D.D., Rector of Otford, Kent, in "Pantheism and Christianity."

"L'homme est le fils de Dieu. Le nom de fils suppose commune essence, émanation, Panthéisme."

"The popular Pantheism of cool grot and haunted oak became vulgarised and died out of the land as a faith, chiefly because Greek morals were depraved with war and slavery and their attendant licence, and men grew too fierce and foul to abide the Nymphs or Pan."—From "The Natural Theology of Natural Beauty," by R. S. Tyrwhitt, M.A., Rector of St Mary Magdalene, Oxford.

BETWEEN Theism and Pantheism no hard and fast line can be drawn. The theism of Epictetus the master is identical with the Higher Pantheism. The term, "Cosmic Theism," proposed by Rodolf Suffield (Unitarian minister and convert from

Rome), includes both forms of faith. The pantheist believes, with Paul, that "in God we live, and move, and have our being," and that "God is not far from every one of us" (Acts xvii. 27, 28). He believes that God animates and sustains all creatures, high and lowly, that He is not only in a past age and a particular spot—Jerusalem, Mecca, or Benares—but now and everywhere. It may be thought that Pantheism is one thing and Christianity another. Nothing can be further from the truth. Pantheism is the root and basis both of Christianity, of so-called Paganism, and also of every other religion that holds any germs of truth.

No reasonable definition of the term "Christian" will exclude the devout theist or pantheist; and conversely there is no reason why a Christian may not also be a pantheist. If he believes in one great Spirit ever present everywhere, in whom we live and move, and have our being, he is not far from sharing our higher and nobler faith.

Pantheism is indeed not antagonistic to Christianity, to Hellenism, and still less to Judaism. Each of these comes into contact with Pantheism through its higher elements, while Pantheism embraces all and each of the partial and tribal religions of the world, just as the broad ocean includes the little gulfs and bays and inlets that lie round its shores.

Lacordaire attempts to separate Pantheism from Theism.

"There are (he says) but two fundamental doctrines in the world, Theism and Pantheism. Whoever is not a theist is logically a pantheist, and whoever is not a pantheist is necessarily a theist. Every man must choose between these two theories. The human mind cannot conceive a third doctrine upon the principle of things."

In the name of truth we protest against this sophistry! What does Lacordaire mean by the Theism which he recommends to his faithful dupes? A metaphysical abstraction, a figment of the mind, a god divorced from Nature, a dummy, a Dagon-deity which will fall prostrate when confronted with the ark of truth. Such is the foundation on which the theologian rears the structure of his soul-destroying superstitions.

And what does Lacordaire understand by the Pantheism which he condemns? The worship of a God "deprived of personality." It stands to reason that such a God is no Deity, but something lower than a man, inferior even to a dog. But the higher Pantheism knows nothing of this impersonal Deity. The dilemma of the Romanist theologian leaves us unscathed. As theists we reject his spurious Theism, and as pantheists we utterly repudiate the atheistic system which he would force upon us. In one hand he offers a God divorced from Nature,

and therefore unnatural, impossible, unthinkable ; in the other he holds out as a warning nature emptied of God's indwelling Spirit, a soulless universe, a hideous materialism. We will have nothing to say to either of his two alternatives !

Schopenhauer also asserts that Pantheism is "only a polite form of Atheism." This may apply to the impersonal scientific "monism" of Ernst Haeckel, but it does not touch the idealist Pantheism of Epictetus, which is identical with that of Paul, and closely related to the emotional theism of Christ. The philosopher Victor Cousin rightly protests that "to suppose the world empty of God, and God separated from the world is an unbearable and almost impossible abstraction." To confound the higher Pantheism with Atheism is merely to reproduce an ignorant misconception ; but to identify theism with the Romanist superstition, as does Lacordaire, is an insult to common-sense and a peculiarly audacious perversion of the truth.

The animism of the savage may well be, as Mary Kingsley has hinted in her admirable African books, the earliest unenlightened stage of a pantheistic philosophy, the only philosophy which is possible to those who live in contact with Nature. But we are not concerned either to trace out the dawnings of Pantheism, or to defend its lower developments. The beauty of Robert Buchanan's poem entitled *God Evolving* cannot blind us to the fact that it is atheistic.

The beaten track to atheism does not lie through Cosmic Theism and the Higher Pantheism. Far from it! Seek atheism rather among those who pay a hypocritical homage to the demon gods of orthodoxy. Seek it in the works of theologians like Haweis who denies the omnipotence of God.<sup>1</sup>

"We are convinced that both the theoretical atheism of the unbeliever and the practical atheism termed orthodoxy can only be vanquished by a force which they as yet but dimly perceive, viz., the influence of the pantheistic spirit" (M'Call).

"Ethnic religions, national gods and creeds, are things of the past. Religious thought aims at catholicity (that is, universality) and ideality: individual experience in preference to mere belief in historical personages and authorities."<sup>2</sup>

Pantheism (Cosmic Theism) alone is universal, cosmopolitan, "catholic." Pantheism has no dogmas to defend, no riddles to resolve, no doubts to distract, and no problems to perplex us. The pantheist has awakened from the slumber of superstition: he sees imprinted on all things the likeness of God, and he is satisfied (Psalm xvii. 15). For "God is seen in the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul, and the clod."<sup>3</sup> "Split the wood and I am there: raise the stone and thou shalt find me." With Tennyson (*Higher Pantheism*) we exclaim:

<sup>1</sup> "The Broad Church," p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Countess of Caithness, in the "Mystery of Ages."

<sup>3</sup> Browning, *Soul*.

“The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,  
The hills, and the plains ; are not these,  
O soul, the vision of Him who reigns ?”

We believe in one Great Spirit ever present everywhere, in whom we live and move and have our being. This is our all-sufficient theory and doctrine. It is based on no argument : requires no confirmation, and admits of no contradiction. This rock is our sure refuge. Here the din of the disputing sects does not reach our ears, nor are we shaken by the storms of doubt.

Philosophers may sound the deep doctrines of Averrhoes, Erigena, and Spinoza : we revere these great thinkers ; but we take our stand upon the simple belief that “God is not far from every one of us.”

In his valuable essay on Christian Pantheism, Allanson Picton says :

“Pantheism involves less arbitrary assumption and is more manifestly congruous with facts than any other theory whatever.”

And again :

“Pantheism takes its stand upon the feeling of an infinite unity which grows in strength with every extension of our knowledge. Pantheism is involved in the increasing discredit of every theory which necessitates a creation out of nothing. It is the inevitable corollary of the doctrines of continuity and evolution. Pantheism assumes nothing but the fact of our own consciousness and its education by the perceived contrasts

and agreements of the outer world. It finds a revelation in the present moment, which is the sum of all the past and the germ of all the future."

From "Christianity and Pantheism," by Dr John Hunt, Vicar of Otford, Kent, I take the following passages :

"Pantheism is the theology of reason. It is the goal of religion, because it is the goal of thought. There is no halting short of pantheism except by ceasing to think. Churches and sects may strive to make resting-places on the way by appealing to the authority of an established system, by citing the letter of some sacred scripture, or by attempting to fix the limits of religious thought. But the reason which God has given us, in its inevitable development, and its divinely appointed love of freedom breaks all such bonds and casts them to the winds."

"Does Pantheism (asks the same writer) contain anything so objectionable that in order to avoid it we must renounce the exercise of reason? To trace the history of theology from its first dawning among the Greeks down to the present day, and to describe the whole as opposed to Christianity is surely to place Christianity in antagonism with the universal reason of mankind. To regard, as we must, all the greatest minds that have been engaged in the study of theology as Pantheists, and to imply by this term men irreligious, unchristian, or atheistic is surely to say that religion, Christianity and Theism have but little agreement with reason. Are we seriously prepared to make this admission?"



I will conclude this chapter with an eloquent passage from the same learned writer :

“Our thoughts concerning God reach a stage where silence is the sublimest speech. As the little child that at eventime lifts its eyes to the great blue vault of heaven, and says of the ten thousand stars that twinkle there, these are God’s eyes, He is the silent witness and watcher of my deeds : so must we say of this great world that GOD IS EVERYWHERE, in all things He see us, and in all things we see Him. The profoundest philosopher, the man most deeply learned in science, returns to the creed of the world’s infancy, and hears in the roar of the thunder that voice which is full of majesty, sees in the lightning the flashes of the divine presence, and in all the manifold operations of Nature’s laws the working of AN EVERPRESENT GOD.”

The following lines are included in Archbishop Trench’s *Sacred Latin Poetry*; from which, I suppose, we may infer that orthodoxy has no objection to Pantheism, provided that it is written in Latin :

“Supra cuncta, subter cuncta  
Extra cuncta, intra cuncta :  
Intra cuncta, nec inclusus,  
Extra cuncta, nec exclusus :  
Supra cuncta, nec elatus  
Subter cuncta, nec substratus,  
Supra totus providendo,  
Subter totus sustinendo :  
Extra totus amplectendo,  
Intra totus est implendo.”

—By HILDEBERT, of Lavardin,  
Bishop of Mans, afterwards Bishop of Tours.

## CHAPTER XXXI

## UNITY—DUALITY—TRINITY

"The real Trinity is that of the Father, the Mother, and the Son."—AUGUSTE COMTE.

The three persons of the primordial Trinity correspond to the three great Revelations of Deity.

"Tous les sentiments religieux qui gisent au cœur de l'homme se sont épanouis sous la triple action de Dieu (inward revelation), de la Nature (outward revelation), et de l'histoire (Humanity, the third and completing revelation)."—F. DE ROUGEMONT, "Le Peuple Primitif."

"The psychologist, with all his struggles, never appears to be able to get rid of his body: and the materialist leaves something extremely deficient in the vivacity of his proofs by his ignorance of that *primum mobile* which is the Soul of everything."—LEIGH HUNT.

THE lowest organism, the monad, animal or vegetable, consists of a single cell. Here we see unity on the lowest plane, primitive unity. When cells unite to form animated creatures one degree removed above the lowest organism, this primitive unity disappears, and at the same time the foundation of a higher unity is laid. For these lowly types are but agglomerations of simple and unspecialised cells, or in other words, they are repetitions of similar parts. But in the higher organisms a more complex unity is seen. This unity becomes still more evident in the vertebrates, and at last is perfected in man.

As the monera by slow gradations reached the dignity of man, so man himself upon this higher plane forms the starting-point of a new cycle of progress. For realising, first, the unity of the family made up of members of which he is one, next, that of the race consisting of families of which his own is part, he must rise at last to the conception of a still higher unity, namely, that of humanity in which all the races of mankind unite. Into this supreme unity we must each one of us be built, yet we hope and believe without forfeiting our freedom or our individuality. Thus will be fulfilled that second cycle which commenced when the first spark of reason kindled in the brain of some anthropoid ape, and he became a man! This doctrine was not unknown to the master Epictetus, and by Christ it was most emphatically taught. Tolstoy says: "Good is only possible for me if I accept my unity with all mankind." (What I believe.) The conclusions of modern science point to a mysterious unity in Nature, a oneness underlying the infinite diversity that meets the eye.

Inextricably associated with this unity of Nature there is a mysterious duality. "Everything in Nature is bi-polar."<sup>1</sup> The granite of the everlasting hills has each felspar crystal twinned: in the vast oolite formation every glistening grain is double. The same law holds good as sex in the animal and vegetable world. Polarity,

<sup>1</sup> Emerson, "Character."

sex, duality is part of the constitution of the universe. You cannot avoid or escape it; you may not exclude it from morality, religion, or philosophy. Sex lay at the very heart of Religion in India, Egypt, Palestine, and Greece. A sexless Religion, like a sexless man, is barren. Hermaphroditism which would trample on sex is insane. The ancient devotees of Cybele and those modern fanatics who dwell by the banks of the Obi; the worshippers of Ganymedes and their latter day imitators whose prophet is Walt Whitman: all these defy the law of duality, and they are all blotted from the book of life.

Now every animal in its own degree, and man in a supreme degree, consists of a body or organism animated by a soul or spirit. He is not a body, he is not a soul. He is a duality. This Cartesian doctrine is that of the idealist, and this view it is absolutely useless to discuss, for its acceptance or denial is affected by no reasoning and based on no argument, but depends upon the constitution of the mind. The followers of Sadok in ancient times and our modern materialists regard man's soul as a function of his body, which soul, if it ever existed, disappears at death.

Against the materialist position I have no desire to argue, for I should regard it as a waste of time. I am content to believe with Darwin ("Journal") that "there is more in man than the

mere breath of his body," something, in fact, which is not necessarily dissolved by death. This something I call "soul." But I do not define it. Before passing on I will only remark that the materialist view reduces man to an automaton, and robs conscience of any higher sanction than each man pleases to assign to it.

The idealist who sees the unseen Soul in Man will also see the unseen Spirit in Nature. These two things stand or fall together. As man, the microcosm, without ceasing to be one, is a duality; so, Deity, the macrocosm, is both a unity and a duality. For we know that our bodies are composed of the same elements as those which exist in Nature: and how can we doubt that our souls are akin to the Universal Spirit! Epictetus the master says: "How can you separate man's body from Nature or his soul from the Divinity?"

Some may say that this is anthropomorphism, or supposing the Deity to bear a resemblance to man. But no; it is anthropomorphism to attribute to the Deity our human weakness, our limitations, our passions, and our sins, as did the Hebrews in the case of their tribal god Javeh. From this, and from all irreverence, we would be free. We merely accept the ancient venerable truth that "Man is formed in the image of God," and must therefore share the nature of the Deity. Does not Paul assert that we are "the offspring of God" (Acts xvii. 28),

not merely creatures manufactured as man makes a clock or a thermometer? And how is it possible to escape the conclusion that this divine paternity proclaimed by Paul and much more emphatically by Epictetus ("Discourses," i. 3, and i. 9, etc.), this divine sonship claimed by them, implies a sharing of the fundamental essence of the Deity. This doctrine held, as is fitting, with infinite humility, exalts and raises man, while it is not derogatory to the majesty of God.

By attributing to God our own best qualities, justice and mercy and purity and the like, we venture to claim kinship with the Deity; and so long as we strive not to dishonour this kinship, we are guilty of no profanity. In this sense anthropomorphism is legitimate, as Kant has shown by reasoning which need not here be reproduced.

We do not attempt any definition of the Deity. Spinoza has said that "To define God is to deny God." We dare not predicate anything about the Deity, except that He is above us and beyond us, and that He is the source of those ideals at which we ought to aim. However, while we renounce as presumption and profanity all attempts to express our conception of the Deity in any set formula of words or phrases, we are nevertheless compelled, as we use the term "Deity," to attach some meaning to the word. And here, as in all other cases that arise

we are well content to abide by the wisdom of the ancients. All that can possibly be known about man and his destiny, all that can possibly be inferred about the Deity and man's relation to Him, is so extremely simple that it was thought out and known thousands of years ago. In fact all that is worth knowing, all that can be known, about these mysteries is absolutely self-evident to those who are not degraded by vice or turned aside by prejudice.

Let us remember that these abstract questions are of importance only as far as they affect life and conduct. "*Omnia philosophiae praecepta sunt ad vitam referenda.*" Belief in the soul of man and in the Spirit of Nature matters only because this belief is rightly regarded as the coping-stone of idealism. The great ideals, justice, mercy, purity, etc., are important, are vital, because they govern, or should govern, life and conduct, and for no other reason. If these great ideals could subsist, if they could be sufficiently established, without any belief in the soul of man or the Spirit of Nature, well and good. Then this belief would cease to be of any consequence to any one. But the mind of man (of some men, at least) is so constituted that the great ideals just mentioned are inseparably associated with the soul, co-exist with the soul, and would disappear if soul were not, as colours vanish when the light is gone. For ideals may be regarded as

the attributes of soul. When men, through sensuality and selfishness, lose hold of those ideals which were born with them, the soul shrivels, as it were, and dies. Materialism is the death of the soul, the severing of the tie that binds the soul to Deity and life.

We will assume, then, that man is both a unity and a duality, and we will assume it as a postulate which needs only to be stated in order to be accepted and believed. Now, a trinity follows directly from this postulate, and is implied—SOUL together with BODY is MAN: similarly, the universal SPIRIT together with NATURE is Life or DEITY. This trinity is based upon no subtle reasoning; it is simple, natural, inevitable, nothing is postulated but a soul in man, and a kindred Spirit in Nature.

The Christian trinity is an ignorant distortion of this primordial one. For the meaningless formula "Father, son, and holy spirit" we should have "Father, Mother, son." The divine "Mother" is Nature in her benign and gentle aspect; the divine "Son" is Humanity, of whom Epictetus, Christ, and all the Great and Good are types: the divine "Father" is the Creative Spirit Who brooding upon Nature produces life (Gen. i. 27). This same Creative Spirit appears in the New Testament as the fabled father of the hero or man-god, Christ.

In Egypt the divine Father, Mother, and Son



were known as Osiris, Isis, and Horus. Nature, the divine Mother, is still worshipped by the Romanist as Mary, type of perfect womanhood and queen of heaven. By Protestants she has, to their great loss, been thrust aside to make way for the Hebrew tribal war-god Javeh (or Jehovah) Sbaoth, the Mars of the fierce Arab tribes who overran Palestine. The dull and brutal conquerors of ancient and modern times, reject (as is natural, and as we might expect) both the mild and gentle nature-goddess and the virtues over which she presides. They want a god who will bless their armaments and approve of their atrocities.

With the truculent Javeh, and with the mutilated trinity into which he has intruded, Rational Religion can have no concern. Frances Power Cobbe, the saintly prophetess of theism, ignores him altogether, and prays to "God our Father and our Mother."

Beyond and above the divine trinity of *Spirit, Nature, Life*, is Deity, including and sustaining all. He is revealed or made known to us inwardly in Reason and Conscience as the Holy Spirit, the first person of the trinity, the Creator, God the Father. She is revealed outwardly in Nature, as God the Mother, who sustains and feeds her children. And He or She is reflected dimly in toiling, suffering Humanity, and especially in the Great and Good, whom we must imitate, but whom we dare not worship, for that spark

of Deity which shines in them may also flicker in ourselves.

**“God is to the spiritual world and to the physical world what man is to his mind and to his body.** The universe is composed of two hemispheres, viz. the spiritual world and the physical world, as man is formed by the union of mind and body. Nature includes all bodies : Spirit (God the Father, the Holy Spirit) comprehends all minds or souls. Our own bodies form part of universal Nature, our souls of universal Spirit. And as our minds and our bodies are diverse yet equivalent expressions of our personality which is one ; so Nature and Spirit are special and equal manifestations of one and the same Divine Essence.”<sup>1</sup>

“All are but parts of one stupendous Whole  
Whose Body Nature is, and God the Soul.”

As the Pythia of old delivered her oracles seated on a golden tripod, so truth rests ever on a threefold basis : (i.) Obedience to God the Father as inwardly revealed in Reason and Conscience ; (ii.) Nature-worship, that is to say : love and reverence for Nature, God the Mother, as the outward revelation of Deity ; (iii.) The service of the Divine Son, Humanity. Now Humanitarian Theism, or the religion of Christ and the Gospels, contains but two of these three elements, for Nature-worship and the ideal of womanhood are wanting. On the other hand, Nature - Theism, or the Higher Pantheism, is

<sup>1</sup> Krause and Tiberghien, “La Vie Morale.”

equally incomplete unless we add to Nature-worship and theism the Service of the Divine Son or the "Enthusiasm of Humanity." Some socialists to whom their system is something more than a mere political and social reconstruction would elevate Fraternity into a religion, forgetting that the service of the Divine Son pre-supposes obedience to God the Father and love of God the Mother. All those systems are faulty and incomplete which do not lay equal emphasis on each one of the three elements. Kant builds on Conscience, the first person of the Trinity: Comte on the Divine Son. Both attain logical precision at the cost of truth.

## DEITY

  
 SPIRIT

 Mind  
 active element

MACROCOSM

LIFE


 Motion  
 result

  
 NATURE

 Matter  
 passive element

MICROCOSM

 SOUL  
 Father

 MAN  
 Child

 BODY  
 Mother

Gods or Kings

 Solar Heroes  
 (Ideal Men)

 Goddesses or Queens  
 (Ideal Women)

Holy Spirit

 Christ  
 Buddha

 Mary  
 Maia

Osiris

Horus

Isis

 Zeus  
 etc.

Adonis (Thammuz)

Astarte (Mylitta)

Heracles

Alcmena

Crishna

Devaki

Prometheus

etc.

## CHAPTER XXXII

GOD THE FATHER : SPIRIT

D. O. M.

Credo in Spiritum Patrem Divinum.

"Not him that with fantastic boasts  
 A sombre people dreamed they knew ;  
 The mere barbaric God of Hosts,  
 That edged their sword and braced their thigh ;  
 A god they pitted 'gainst a swarm  
 Of neighbour gods less vast of arm.

· · · · ·  
 O streaming worlds, O crowded sky,  
 O Life and mine own soul's abyss,  
 Myself am scarce so small that I  
 Should bow to Deity like this !"

—WM. WATSON, *The Unknown God*.

BELIEF in the Holy Spirit, God the Father, is a corollary of belief in the soul of man : both stand or fall together, for the Spirit of Nature answers to the soul of man. This belief is intuitive, a part of the constitution of the mind. It can neither be proved, nor yet disproved by logic or by syllogism. There have always been, and there always will be, men in whom the higher faculties are dormant, or even altogether wanting, materialists who see no soul in man, no Spirit in Nature. But we believe with Ruskin that "a Spirit does actually exist who teaches the ant her path, the bird her building, and men in an instinctive and marvellous way

whatever lovely acts and noble deeds are possible to them."

So also Emerson: "Man is conscious of a Universal Spirit within or behind his individual life, wherein as in a firmament the natures of justice, truth, and love arise and shine."

"A gracious Spirit o'er this world presides,  
And o'er the heart of man."

—WORDSWORTH, *Prelude*.

The philosopher, Victor Cousin, thus emphatically repudiates the conception of a soulless universe: "To suppose that the world is empty of God, and that God is separated from the world, is an unbearable and almost impossible abstraction."

"God the Father," as the term Father plainly indicates, is the Creative Spirit of the universe, alluded to in Genesis as the "Spirit of God" which presided over the birth of the Cosmos. He is again spoken of in the Gospels as the "Holy Spirit," Spiritus Sanctus, who is the father of Christ and of all men in whose nature there is anything divine.

The Holy Ghost of the Christian triad has obviously been thrust into a subordinate position owing to the intrusion into the primordial trinity of the Hebrew tribal god Javeh who has usurped the position of God the Father. Ghost, German *Geist*, means spirit: and the Latin word *spiritus* means breath, as does also the Greek *pneuma*. The Latin word is masculine, the Hebrew feminine,

the Greek neuter. This is merely an accident of language, and has no significance.

Conscience, Reason, Intuition (of abstract Beauty and Harmony), and Love have been universally regarded as divine attributes of the human soul. And when we assert that these faculties are divine, what do we mean but this, that through them we are connected in a mysterious way with the great Spirit of the Universe. In other words, these faculties constitute the *inner*, as Nature is the *outer* revelation of Deity. It may be that reason and conscience lead more directly to the apprehension of the Deity revealed in the Spirit as God the Father, whereas intuition and love are more closely connected with the manifestation of Deity in Nature as God the Mother.

Reverence for conscience is not a special feature of Christianity. A Greek verse runs :

“To every mortal, conscience is divine.”

Bacon poetically calls it “a sparkle of the purity of our first estate.” Shakespeare says that “conscience makes cowards of us all.” But conscience should rather give courage and comfort to the good ; for it is indeed the witness of God within us, the “Holy Spirit” “Paraclete” or “Comforter” (John xiv. 26) sustaining us when other comfort fails, the divine monitor or inward voice, to stifle which is the “sin unto spiritual death” (1 John iv. 16), the blasphemy

for which there is no forgiveness (Matt. xii. 31) for "God's Spirit will not always strive with man." Tatian has said, "Conscience and God are one."<sup>1</sup>

The "answer of a good conscience towards God" (1 Peter iii. 21) is not a mere empty phrase (whether the Greek will bear this translation or not). When the human will is in perfect accord with the divine, a harmony is heard within the soul. This answering note is a reality, though, like the tartini tones on the violin, it will not be audible to all ears and at all times. The true saint hears this answering voice by day and night. "Never say that you are alone," says Epictetus, "for God and your guardian angel (that is your conscience) are ever with you." No philosopher has ventured to assert that the "dæmon" of Socrates was either an imposture or a hallucination.<sup>2</sup>

The Holy Ghost and conscience are none other than the voice of God, which echoes in the ears of him who has given up all for an ideal: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). Young says:

"Who conscience sent, her verdict will support,  
And God above assert that God in man."

For, as the same poet reminds us, "conscience is a part of human nature."

<sup>1</sup> See F. P., "Intuitive Morals," chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Zeller's "Socrates," chap. iv.

The symbol of the "Holy Ghost" and of conscience is a dove. This also is borrowed from more ancient religions. The Assyrian god, Asshur, was represented as a bird with outstretched wings.

The feast or festival of the Holy Spirit or conscience is Pentecost or Whitsunday. Pentecost is from the Greek word for fifty, because the Christian feast took the place of an ancient Hebrew one, which occurred "a week of weeks," or fifty days after Easter.

This old festival was a harvest home.

God the Father, or the Holy Spirit, is revealed also in Reason, which all men everywhere have regarded as divine. Reason (*logos*, absurdly translated "word" in John i. 1), being an attribute of Deity, is identified with God in the first verse of the fourth Gospel. In other words, God is revealed in reason, just as God is revealed in light and truth and love, and he who obeys reason obeys God.

"What reason bids, God bids."—YOUNG.

Reason is the true light, which lights every man that comes into the world (John i. 9), the "pillar of fire," which leads us as we "wander in the way of wickedness," which "shows us light, and points out the way in which we should go" (Exod. xiii. 21; Neh. ix. 19). The active mind of the century is tending more and more to the two poles, Rome and Reason, the



sovereign Church or the free soul, authority or personality, God in us or God in our masters (O. W. Holmes).

Of the "three R's"—Rome, Revelation, Reason—we choose without any hesitation the last, for we know that "revelation" is but another name for bibliolatry; and as regards "Rome," we must say with Bismarck, "Non ibimus Canossam." This is a vital question on which no compromise is possible. If the Bible agrees with reason and common-sense, we may quote it, just as we would any other book; if it is in error, we may contradict it just as freely. "Sine ratione non valet auctoritas."

The Rev. E. Thring, late headmaster of Uppingham, says, in an address on education: "I prefer not quoting the authority of Holy Scripture; we do not want authority, but common-sense." These are the words of Pascal: "God's providence plants religion in the mind by reason, in the heart by grace." And Fénelon says: "*Light must not be sought outside ourselves but it is to be found within.*" The light of reason is common to all men in every corner of the universe." "Reason is divine, reason is everywhere, desiring the good, and moving the world" (Aristotle).

#### INSCRIPTION FOR A SHRINE

*From BURNS (altered)*

Thou of an independent mind,  
With soul resolved, with soul resigned;  
Prepared power's proudest frown to brave,  
Who wilt not be, nor have, a slave;

Reason alone who dost revere,  
 And Deity alone dost fear ;  
 Approach this shrine, and worship here."

God, the great Father, kindled at one flame  
 The world of rationals, one spirit poured  
 From Spirit's awful fountain, poured Himself  
 Through all their souls, but not in equal stream,  
 Profuse or frugal of the inspiring God,  
 As His wise plan demanded. And when passed  
 Their various trials in their various spheres,  
 If they continue rational as made,  
 Recalls them all before Himself again :  
 His throne their centre, and His smile their crown."

—YOUNG (*altered*).

#### PATER NOSTER

1. When Sinai's thunders o'er us roll,  
 And dark forebodings rack the soul,  
 How sweet a Father's voice to hear,  
 Whispering peace, dispelling fear.
2. When grieved to find besetting sin  
 And foul corruption lodged within  
 How sweet a Father's words of peace :  
 "Thou shalt not fall, be strong in grace."
3. When dark and cheerless is our path,  
 Blighted our hopes, and weak our faith ;  
 How sweet to have a Father nigh,  
 Who sees our tears and notes our sigh.
4. When worn by cares, by toil oppressed,  
 The weary spirit longs for rest ;  
 How sweet our Father's voice divine :  
 "Rejoice in Me, thy griefs are mine."
5. And when life's conflicts all are o'er,  
 And sin and cares distress no more ;  
 How sweet will sound our Father's voice :  
 "Thy work is done, come up : rejoice !"

## MORE THAN THIS

## I

I saw the beauty of the world  
Before me like a flag unfurled,  
The splendour of the morning sky,  
And all the stars in company !  
I thought, how beautiful it is !  
My soul said, There is more than this.

## II

I saw the pomps of death and birth,  
The generations of the earth ;  
I looked on saints and heroes crowned,  
And love as wide as heaven is round :  
I thought how wonderful it is !  
My soul said, There is more than this.

## III

Sometimes I have an awful thought  
That bids me do the thing I ought ;  
It comes like wind, it burns like flame ;  
How shall I give that thought a name ?  
It draws me like a loving kiss—  
My soul says, There is more than this.

## IV

I dreamed an angel of the Lord  
With purple wings and golden sword  
And such a splendour in his face  
As made a glory in the place :  
I thought how beautiful he is !  
My soul said, There is more than this.

## V

That angel's Lord I cannot see,  
Or hear, but he is Lord to me :  
And in the heavens, the earth, the skies,  
The good which lives till evil dies,  
The love which I cannot withstand,  
God writes His name with His own hand.

—WILLIAM BRIGHTLY RANDS

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## GOD THE MOTHER : NATURE

Ave Maria !

Credo in Naturam, Matrem Divinam.

*"The living soul of earth and the living soul of man are the ultimate spiritual certainties, and in their mutual influence and interaction the spiritual secret of all life gradually unfolds itself. Whatever be the protest that man may have to make against Nature, he has still more to learn from it in loving communion—something of heroic resignation, of unquenchable hope, of ultimate peace."*—A. L. LILLEY.

NATURE, *God the Mother*, has been universally represented as a divine woman, holding in her lap a child which represents Humanity. Isis and Horus, Mary and Christ, Diana and Apollo are counterparts ; they are complementary, for of each pair, one is the ideal man, the other is the type of perfect womanhood.

"If the great and distant Heaven appeared to the ancients as a universal ruler and lord, the source of all things, the Father of the Gods, as they put it ; surely the beautiful Earth, kind nurse, nourisher and preserver of all things that have life, could be called the universal Mother. If the fierce summer and noonday sun could be looked on as the resistless conqueror, the dread king of the world, holding death and disease in his hand ; was not the quiet, lovely moon, of mild and soothing light, bringing the rest of coolness and healing dews, its gentle Queen?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zénaïde Ragozin, "Chaldæa."

Thus Eastern kings, heroes, and demigods were likened to the sun, and their consorts to the moon. The life of Hercules is filled with solar symbolism, and this is the case through all the list of heroes who flourished in the twilight of history. The Christian legend will never be understood until the solar element in the life of Christ is recognised. The worship of the "dieu soleil" or solar hero took a sensual, or a spiritual form according to the character of each ancient race, precisely as the Religion of the present day varies from the degraded and repulsive Calvinism of the evangelical sects to the noble idealism of Tolstoy.

Now, though the moon is masculine in German, she is regarded by the southern races as the consort or as the sister of the sun. It was natural and most appropriate that her mild bright disc or silver crescent should stand in Heaven as the symbol of ideal womanhood, of perfect purity, and of divine maternity. It was inevitable that Nature, God the Mother, should be represented and symbolised by

"That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden,  
Whom mortals call the moon."

—SHELLEY, *The Cloud*.

Thus Mary is drawn, like Diana, standing on the crescent moon, or with star-spangled robe, and she is called to this day by her votaries "Regina Coeli," Queen of Heaven.

As in the case of the sun-god, so the goddess of Nature was worshipped under various forms. To the nobler races she was the chaste Diana, cold and unapproachable ; but to coarser natures she was the many-breasted Ashtaroth, inviting to midnight orgies and licentiousness. The great Nature goddess took the highest and most spiritual form in India, in Egypt, and in Palestine. Isis holding the little Horus in her arms, or Mary, the modest matron, smiling on her infant son ; this is the thought which has inspired all Christian painters, this is the ideal to which men bow wherever the family is sacred and the name of mother is revered.

Protestantism has greatly erred in dethroning Mary. She stands or falls with Jesus. We cannot separate the sexes. Neither man nor woman can rise or sink alone. If we admire the ideal manhood in Christ or in Apollo, then why not also ideal womanhood in Mary and in Diana? If we have a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," why not, therefore, a woman of sorrows, a "*mater dolorosa*"?

Whence comes the extraordinary delusion by which Protestants are possessed that the Deity is exclusively male? Can it be that the races which have adopted this form of religion appreciate no quality but strength, and will bow down to nothing but brute force in which the male sex has the superiority? But the mark of every falsehood is this, that you dare not follow

it to its logical conclusion. The materialistic Protestant has banished woman from his pantheon, he has imagined a trinity from which the female element is excluded: but he is unable to endure the consequences of his irrational supposition. As a compensation Christ has been endowed with many female qualities of mind and body. His flowing robes, the long hair falling on his shoulders, are not masculine: his gentle nature is exceptional in man. Christ represents in fact an epicene ideal; he has some of the perfections of each sex, and some of the defects of both. Instead of an ideal man and an ideal woman we have an impossible hermaphrodite creature, neither male nor female.

Can we wonder that Romanism gains ground, and that Protestantism is losing its hold upon all who have any perception of beauty and of poetry? Who can feel any enthusiasm for this mutilated Christianity? What purpose can it serve, except to provide a stepping-stone to atheism? May the day be distant when a string of irrational dogmas shall supersede the glowing eastern images which fire the intellect and warm the heart. Because the papist grovels before a dressed-up doll the religious significance of which has never been explained to him, and is obscured by sacerdotalism; because he worships some unsightly image which may have been, like the great Madonna at Santiago, the tar-daubed figure-head of a coal-barge; therefore, the

evangelical Christian refuses to admire a beautiful work of art, and to cherish the ideal of perfect womanhood which it is intended to remind us of.

It will be said that this is sentiment. Yes, but a sentiment based on no delusion, a sentiment common to thousands who are no sentimentalists, a feeling universal in those races among whom the arts and sciences arose. Materialists would fain be rid of sentiment. It is indeed a troublesome encumbrance! But bear in mind that when you have eradicated sentiment, you will certainly find that conscience also is superfluous. "Family affection is sentiment; friendship is sentiment; patriotism is sentiment. A nation with whom sentiment is nothing is on the way to cease to be a nation at all" (J. A. Froude).

As the mystic chorus sings in the last line of Goethe's *Faust*, it is "the eternal type of womanhood that leads us onward." Commenting on this passage, Dr C. G. Higginson (a scholar whose writing and whose life are marked by earnestness and zeal for truth) aptly remarks that its position at the end of the drama lends it a supreme importance. The great poet thus sums up his message to the world: *Das ewig Weibliche*, the intuition of abstract beauty, combined with love, those ideals peculiar to the female sex, and typified in the great Nature goddess of the ancient religions, lead us onward to truths which reason alone could never reach. The same deep



doctrine which Goethe teaches with the vivid emphasis of symbolism is thus soberly stated by Professor James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience."

"Articulate reasons are cogent for us only when our inarticulate feelings of reality have already been impressed in favour of a given conclusion. Our impulsive belief is always what sets up the original body of truth, and our articulately verbalised philosophy is but its showy translation into formulæ. Intuition leads, reason does but follow." (This Intuition and the Inner Light are one.)

We know full well that Nature is ruthless, and that she appears to be regardless of man. "The sun shines on the evil and on the good." We know also that man himself is vile, *homo homini dæmon*. But we repudiate that pessimism which sees nothing but cruelty in Nature and nothing but vileness in Humanity. Man has his better side: we see it in the Great and Good. And to Nature also there is a milder aspect which sages of old have symbolised as Queen of Heaven.

The carpel fills the centre of the flower; so it may well be, as Goethe hints, that at the heart of things a female form presides. Oriental scholars have thus interpreted the mystic formula "Om padmi man." Perchance if man were purged of that brutality on which the ruling races pride themselves, we might return to the

matriarchal stage with which society commenced ; and the melody of the Troubadour might replace the tramp of armies and the clash of steel. But indeed the matriarchal theory of life is at bottom as false and as one-sided as that called patriarchal. We see it carried to its logical conclusion by the spider and the bee. Neither patriarchal nor yet matriarchal is the system aimed at by Idealism, but parental. Thus alone can the equality of the sexes be ensured and the great law of duality be obeyed.

The idealist need not fear the charge of "mariolatry." He stands under no temptation to confound either Christ or his mother with the Deity : but we think that the man who holds his own mother sacred (the beautiful French phrase is "*ma sainte mère*") will reverence for her sake all true matrons and all innocent maidens everywhere, and will accept as an ideal, Mary, the lovely dream of the Eastern imagination which has been reproduced by the artists of the West.

Blest is he whose guiding star is "the fair pale form with front severe, with wide blue eyes which bear mild wisdom in their gaze : purity shines from her, not young-eyed innocence, but that which comes from wider knowledge, which restrains the tide of passionate youth, and leads the musing soul by the calm depths of wisdom" (L. Morris).

In one respect only can we improve upon the

early ideal of womanhood. The reformation of the sixteenth century has reasserted the truth, familiar to the Greeks, but forgotten from the time of Hypatia to that of Lady Jane Grey, that culture and enlightenment (but not competitive cram) is a crown of glory to a woman.

How low has our ideal fallen when we permit women to exhibit themselves upon the stage, and to take part in the degrading ballet! Worse than this, we take woman from the harem only to thrust her into the arena, forgetting that wage-earning and competition, toil and war, are not the lot of woman but the doom of man. Surely in these days when maid and matron strive to resemble the Hetaera (and frequently succeed too well), there is pressing need that we should reinstate, side by side with Christ and Apollo, the mother Mary and the Virgin Queen.

A worshipper tends to become identified with the ideal which he cherishes, carried beyond himself by the object of his worship. Especially in abstract beauty does this magnetism reside. Some places cast a spell upon us, and there are scenes bound up with sacred memories. To these our pilgrimage should be. Plato, discoursing of divine beauty, represents his characters as "entranced by the genius of the spot." Seek, then, these spells, yield to this state of trance, restore the "High Place" (public garden, park, or picnic resort) and set up the Ashera (May-pole); thus shall low aims and sordid cares be

banished from our lives ; thus shall we be transfigured and inspired, and catch some reflection of that beauty which haunts the unfrequented spots and hovers on the lonely heights.

Carry the thyrsus (a vasculum or an alpenstock will do as well) with pæans of praise on the moonlit ridge of Cithæron. Deck with fresh flowers the fair fountain of Banias, as in the early days of a milder worship before the bleeding victims were butchered on the reeking altars of Javeh. Climb where the air is pure ; gaze on each beautiful scene, till the soul freed from the fetters of sense communes with the Spirit of Nature.

#### NATURE-WORSHIP

Thrice blessed is the man with whom  
 The gracious prodigality of Nature  
 The balm, the bliss, the beauty and the bloom,  
 The bounteous Providence in every feature,  
 Recall the good Creator to His creature,  
 Making all earth a fane, all heaven its dome !  
 In his tuned spirit the wild heather-bells  
     Ring Sabbath knells :  
 The<sup>r</sup>jubilate of the soaring lark  
     Is chant of clerk :  
 For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet :  
 The sod's a cushion for his pious want :  
 And consecrated by the heaven within it,  
     The sky-blue pool a font.  
 Each cloud-capped mountain is holy altar :  
     An organ breathes in every grove  
     And the full heart's a psalter,  
 Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love !

—THOMAS HOOD

## CHAPTER XXXIV

GOD THE MOTHER: NATURE—(*continued*)

“Nature Worship still exists in the World to an almost incredible extent.”—E. RECLUS.

“La Nature seule, et non pas le tumulte des foules peut nous initier à la vérité.”—E. RECLUS.

Now, a doctrine or a theory which has no direct bearing on life and conduct is futile, and this applies to the doctrine of the sacredness of Nature. If Nature be considered sacred, as being animated by the Divine Spirit, it follows that the disfigurement of the landscape, the pollution of streams, and all else that mars the beauty of Nature is forbidden by the religion of Idealism. It follows also that the man who, acknowledging the kinship of the higher animals, abstains from their flesh, is blessed above him who slays them for his food. And from the standpoint of Idealism how fiendish is the crime of those who under the pretence of science inflict tortures on defenceless animals.

What shall we say of him who kills for sport? The sufferings which he inflicts shall fall upon him: despair shall lie in wait for him; and when he calls to Heaven in his agony, the Guardian of all helpless things shall laugh him to scorn.

If the sacredness which was in books and Bibles, in churches and chapels, be dissipated and lost, we are committed to materialism. This feeling of reverence must be transferred, or

rather restored, to Nature. For Nature is the source of sacredness. Whence came the sacredness attributed to Bibles and to revelations? Simply and solely from the fact that the mass of men, becoming alienated from Nature, lost the sense of right and wrong, the "Inner Light" which cannot exist apart from a natural life; then feeling a void, realising their impotence to guide themselves, they turned for guidance to those few who were still (or professed to be) in contact with Nature and therefore with God. The sacredness of Bibles and churches is but an echo of the sacredness of Nature; it is borrowed from Nature, and to Nature it must be restored.

The man who lives in contact and communion with Nature needs no revelation, for he has within him that primary and direct intuition of sacred things from which all other revelations are derived.

Now, as Nature is sanctified by the indwelling Spirit of God, so the human body (a part of Nature) is sanctified as the habitation of the soul which is divine. Know you not that your body is [like Nature] the temple of the Holy Spirit [God the Father]? (1 Cor. vi. 19). This doctrine of the sacredness of the body is a cardinal principle of Idealism. And it must be insisted upon all the more vehemently because it is persistently denied by scientific materialism, and especially by medicalism.

Certain vices which decency forbids us to name

are shunned by the Christian because they are condemned in his Bible. Does Rational Religion allow these vices, or does it also condemn them? And if so, on what grounds? The only true and all-sufficient ground for the condemnation of certain vices and crimes is this, that they are outrages on the sanctity of the body. The disgusting delusion of vaccination, the hideous crime of vivisection, a sin more loathsome than the sin of Sodom, these horrors of hell are possible only to men who have abdicated their manhood by denial of the sacredness of Nature. How true it is that degradation waits on superstition! The South European has no mercy on an animal because "it is not a Christian." We permit the vivisection of dumb animals because it is not directly forbidden in the Bible. The sense of right and wrong is blunted and destroyed, vile things are no longer vile, lies become truth, so soon as ever man deserts the everlasting, ever-present revelations of Conscience and Nature and gropes for guidance in Bibles and sacred books.

The sense of beauty and harmony is akin to reverence for Nature. Thus Elisée Reclus reaches the same conclusion by a different path. The *ugliness* of the shambles, the *vileness* of vivisection it is that strikes him.<sup>1</sup> "Let us become beautiful ourselves: let our lives and our surroundings be beautiful," says the French *savant*. So Epictetus; "I wish to be beautiful in the sight of the Gods." This sense of abstract

<sup>1</sup> Essay on "Vegetarianism," p. 8.

beauty is wanting in the dominant races. Coarse and brutal natures are easily reconciled to vileness if there seems to be profit in it. The materialist judges all things by advantage and utility. But the doctored statistics to which he appeals, even if they were valid, could not make a vile thing other than vile. It may be said that the sense of abstract beauty is subjective. Of course it is, like conscience, and therefore more binding than any external and objective sanction.

Finally, if Nature is sacred, it becomes clear that the study of Nature must replace theology in the Religion of the future. Not through logic and metaphysics, not by books and Bibles can we draw nigh unto the throne of Deity, but by the study of Nature in which the Great Spirit is revealed to man.

“For we have truth in Nature as it comes from God, and it must be read with unbiassed mind and open eye. All that is found in Nature, whatever its orthodoxy or heterodoxy, we are bound to accept” (H. Drummond).

“Without some gleams of science man’s soul is a blank, his morality incongruous, his religion idolatry, his prayer not the utterance of a freeman of the city of God, but the slavish repetition of certain formulæ, his hope of futurity has no better foundation than the fanaticism and the fraud of priests.”<sup>1</sup>

“*Fiducia boni non sine scientia sit*” (Seneca).

<sup>1</sup> D. Campbell, “Gospel of the World’s Divine Order.”



Charles Kingsley says: "If we love and trust and reverence fact and Nature, which are the will of Almighty God Himself, then we shall be really loving and reverencing and trusting God." For "the course of Nature is the art of God" (Young). "Nature," says Wordsworth, "never did betray the heart that loved her." And again: "To the solid ground of Nature trusts the mind that builds for aye." So Florian: "J'observe et je suis (follow) la Nature; c'est mon secret pour être heureux."

The study of Nature is the best antidote to superstition and bigotry, for such culture "inverts the vulgar views, and brings the mind to call that apparent which it used to call real, and that real which it used to call visionary" (Emerson). As Antæus was strong only while he touched the earth, so man decays as soon as he ceases to live in direct contact with Nature.

The worship of Nature is more closely connected with intuition and love than with reason and conscience. Indeed there are some who think that of the faculties of the soul intuition and love are the highest and most divine. Ruskin may perhaps be numbered among these. With sublime eloquence he shows how near is Nature, God the Mother, to the heart of man. These are his words:

"There is religion in everything around us; a calm and holy religion in the unbreathing things of Nature, which man would do well to imitate. It is a meek and blessed influence, stealing in,

as it were, unawares upon the heart; it comes quietly, and without excitement; it has no terror, no gloom in its approaches; it does not rouse up the passions; it is untrammelled by the creeds, and unshadowed by the superstitions of man; it is fresh from the hands of its Author, glowing from the immediate presence of the Great Spirit, which pervades and quickens it; it is written on the arched sky; it looks out from every star; it is on the sailing cloud, and in the invisible wind; it is among the hills and valleys of the earth, where the shrubless mountain top pierces the thin atmosphere of eternal winter or where the mighty forest fluctuates, before the strong wind, with its dark waves of green foliage; it is spread out, like a legible language, upon the broad face of the unsleeping ocean; *it is the poetry of Nature*; it is this which uplifts the spirit within us, until it is strong enough to overlook the shadows of our place of probation—which breaks link after link, the chain that binds us to materiality; and which opens to our imagination a world of spiritual beauty and holiness."

The phrase "Humanitarian Theism" describes with extraordinary accuracy the religion of Christ. For Christ was a Theist, inasmuch as he believed in God; and he was undoubtedly the chief of humanitarians. But Humanitarian Theism ignores the second person of the primordial Trinity. It takes no account of God the Mother, Nature; and for this reason it is incomplete. *The three persons of the primitive Trinity correspond to the three great revelations of Deity. To*

deny one of the three is to lose hold of all, and to fall away from truth.

### NATURE'S SHRINE.

*(Melody of the Mermaid's song in Oberon.)*

#### I

The turf shall be my fragrant shrine,  
My temple, Lord, that arch of Thine,  
My censer's breath the mountain airs  
And silent thoughts shall be my only prayers.

#### II

My choir shall be the moonlight waves,  
When murmuring homeward to their caves :  
Or when the stillness of the sea  
Even more than music breathes and speaks of Thee.

#### III

I'll seek by day some glade unknown,  
All light and silence like Thy throne :  
And the pale stars shall be at night,  
The only eyes that watch my secret rite.

#### IV

Thy heaven, on which 'tis bliss to look,  
Shall be my pure and shining book,  
Where I shall read in words of flame.  
The glories of Thy great and wondrous name.

#### V

There's nothing bright above, below,  
From flowers that bloom to stars that glow,  
But in its light my soul can see  
Some trace and feature of Thy Deity.

—MOORE.

### NATURE WORSHIP

#### I

I sit not where the choristers are chanting  
By shrine of saint within a sculptured nave ;  
But here are harmonies of Nature's granting—  
Her orchestra of wind and wood and wave.

## II

Grander their tones than organ pæans pealing  
 Where painted sunlight slants through arch and aisle :  
 More solemn they than softest measure stealing  
 Of hallowed hymn within the sacred pile.

## III

O spells divine ! Lured by their sweet enthralling  
 My soul is soaring, freed from earthly clod :  
 Ye tempest-tongues, I answer to your calling ;  
 With wind and wood and wave I worship God.

—E. CHAPMAN.

## CHAPTER XXXV

## THE DIVINE SON : HUMANITY

“Est Deus in nobis.”—OVID.

“The sole meaning of Christ is Humanity.”

—Mrs LYNN LINTON.

“We can rise to God only through our fellow-men.”—MAZZINI.

“No man comes to the Father but by me” (Christ) : that is by Humanity, by the service of man.

THE duality of God the *Father*, revealed inwardly in Reason and Conscience, and God the *Mother*, revealed outwardly in Nature, becomes a trinity if we include the Divine *Son*, that is Humanity. For in Humanity also, and especially in the lives of the Great and Good, there is a third and more concrete revelation of Deity.

Humanity was symbolised of old as a divine child seated in the lap of the great mother Nature. Isis and Horus, or Mary and Jesus formed the “Holy Family,” as it is called. Here we see two elements of the primordial Trinity,

viz., God the Mother and the Divine Son. The third element (or person, to use the popular phrase) was frequently omitted from pictures of the Trinity, but sometimes "God the Father" was represented as a venerable man standing beside the mother or matron. Nor to a theist is any profanity involved in such a picture, for these three human figures represent to the idealist not the majesty of the all-sustaining Deity whom "the heavens cannot contain" and the mind of man cannot conceive, but the divine Trinity, Conscience, Nature, and Humanity, through each of which we are able to come into contact with the unseen Deity.

Sometimes in these pictures of the "Holy Family" the first person of the Trinity, that is the Holy Ghost or Creative Spirit or Father, is symbolised as a dove, this "bird of the air" being taken to represent something ethereal, abstract, invisible, that is to say Reason and Conscience, the inward manifestation of Deity.

The second person in the Christian Trinity is Christ or "God the Son," a Jewish reformer who has been idealised and deified. Now, in dealing with this or any other popular superstition two methods are open to us. Firstly, a flat denial. This method commends itself to simple-minded folk who have little insight, but it can lead only through a series of negations to a barren, soulless creed. When a statement is half true and half false we cannot say either yes or no without being

entangled. In concocting these half-truths the priest and the theologian are master hands.

“For oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths ;  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us  
In deepest consequence.”—*Macbeth* i. 3.

Another and safer way of treating superstitious dogmas such as the divinity of Christ is to enquire whether they are to be regarded as distortions and corruptions of some universal truth ; if so, then reaffirm that truth. “Every wide-spread error contains a concealed truth. That is the point on which we must fasten if we wish to overthrow the error” (Dean Stanley).

It is precisely the dim consciousness which we have of a deeper meaning in many of these ancient formulæ which lends them such a strange vitality. In the present case we affirm that Humanity is (potentially) divine, and we are quite willing to accept the infant Horus or Christ as symbols or types of Humanity. For Christ, like all other martyrs of truth, is truly “son of man” or type of Humanity, as the four evangelists assert (Matt. viii. 20 : Mark viii. 38 ; Luke v. 24 ; John i. 51). He is an idealised human character, just as the Apollo Belvedere is an idealised human figure. It does not concern us to know, even if we could discover it, what Syrian enthusiast was the original of the ideal Christ of the Gospels, any more than we are interested in finding out what Greek athlete served as model for the statue of the sun-god.

Both are beautiful in their way; it is good to contemplate the one and the other.

Men of earnest character and spiritual insight have perceived this most important truth. Thus the saint and hero, General Gordon, said: "I have been visiting Christ in the east-end of London," for suffering humanity is Christ (Matt. xxv. 40), and we need none other. In this light we can explain how such passages as John xiv. 6, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," could be put into the mouth of Christ. If these words mean that no other prophet ever pointed men to a higher life, they are absolutely false. But if the early Christian writer, John, or whoever else he may have been, was thinking of Christ as a type of Humanity, then he uttered in Eastern style an everlasting truth which we should express thus in the language of the present day: *The way to heaven and to the knowledge of God is not through philosophy or theology, not by meditation or asceticism, still less by Church and sacrament, nor yet by any scheme of redemption, but by the active service of Humanity.*

In Leigh Hunt's parable the Arab saint was questioned by an angel if he loved God. "I cannot tell," he answered, "but I love and serve my fellow-men." "Then," said the angel, "you may rest assured that God loves you."

A beautifully written pamphlet sold by Mr "John Freeman" of Croydon contains these words:—"The true way to worship God, and the only way, is to serve mankind." This was

the noble and simple creed of the much-abused Tom Paine: "I believe in God, and I love and serve mankind as the only way in which I can love and serve God."

It follows from the doctrine of divine humanity that it is wrong to let men live in poverty and misery without culture, and without recreation. Man, "who is made in the image of the Gods" (Gen. i. 26), may not be thus degraded, or a retribution must follow. For man is "his brother's keeper" (Gen. iv. 9); or, in other words, we are answerable for all the human misery that can be prevented.

This attitude towards our fellow-men is what Paul extols as charity (1 Cor. xiii.), and it is one and the same with the more modern "enthusiasm of humanity."

"In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind's concern is charity."—POPE.

To sum up: Morality is autocentric, Religion is anthropocentric, Science is geocentric, Philosophy is theocentric.

The symbol of Humanity is a cross, which represents the suffering through which the soul is made perfect (Heb. ii. 10). *Pathēmata mathēmata*.

This symbol is borrowed by Christianity from earlier religions. The Egyptians, for instance, had their *crux ansata*, a cross with a ring above it.

Christmas is the festival of the solar hero, and of humanity. This occurs about the time of the



New Year, when the sun is born, as it were ; that is, when the days begin to lengthen.

The origin of the cross or sacred tree has been explained by G. Massey, in the "Natural Genesis," chap. vii.

Although the religion of Idealism is not directly dependent on any philosophical system, yet will it be imperfect and limited when associated with a narrow view of life, an incomplete philosophy. The universe is inevitably reflected in man as a "Holy Family," a primordial Trinity to which all our faculties, and consequently all our activities, have reference. Rational or Natural Religion—Idealism—will be truly related to each of these three elements. It will enjoin: (*a*) obedience to God the Father as revealed in Reason and Conscience; (*b*) love of God the Mother as revealed in the beauty and harmony of Nature; (*c*) Service of the Divine Son, Humanity. Viewed in this light, the popular superstitions are seen to be lamentably defective, and we have valid grounds for rejecting them. The most degraded and worldly are the Greek Church and the Anglican. Romanism, though utterly corrupt and sacerdotal, retains beautiful traces of ancient Nature-worship; that is to say, God the Mother is not repudiated as in all the Protestant sects. Some of the new-fangled systems, Theosophism, Spiritism, etc., though they make a profession of philanthropy and fraternity, are sunk in superstition and steeped in imposture. In the eclipse of Rational Religion,

impostors and mountebanks are numerous, Blavatsky, Dowie, and a hundred others, some posing on platforms, others beating drums, all making a trade of Truth.

### DEUM LAUDAMUS

1. All praise to God who is revealed within,  
As Reason, Conscience, Order, Justice, Truth :  
**Father**, Great Spirit, Comforter in sooth.  
Crownèd with majesty, dwelling in light,  
Wielding the thunderbolt, guiding the storm,  
King of our souls, to Thy laws we conform.
2. All praise to God who is revealed without  
As Nature, on whose bosom we recline,  
**Mother**, all-parent, bounteous, benign :  
Wearing as diadem, Beauty and Grace,  
Queen of the firmament, grant us thy peace !
3. Best praise of God is service of Mankind,  
In whom reflected the Divine appears :  
**Son**, brother, sharer of my hopes and fears ;  
Striving and suffering, burdened with woe,  
Seeking for happiness, finding despair,  
Hail, fellow-prisoner, safety is near !—

### IDEAL MAN AS THE IMAGE OF DEITY

“For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
Is God our Father dear ;  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love  
Is Man His child and care.

“For Mercy has a human heart ;  
Pity a human face ;  
And Love the human form divine ;  
And Peace the human dress.

“Then every man of every clime,  
Who prays in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine—  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.”

—WM. BLAKE, quoted by W. B. YEATS.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## FAITH AND CREED

"The firmest faith is in the fewest words."

"There are no tricks in plain and simple faith."—SHAKESPEARE.

"A man lives by believing something, not by debating and arguing about many things."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

"Fair Truth,  
Friend to the wise, supporter to the weak,  
From thee we learn what e'er is right and just,  
Creeds to reject, professions to distrust,  
Forms to despise, pretensions to deride,  
And, following thee, to follow naught beside."—CRABBE.

"The Creeds of the christian churches, while they have been by far the most potent engine of ecclesiastical power, have also been the most dangerous and insidious enemies of the Religion of Christ."—HIGINBOTHAM in "Science and Religion."

FAITH may be defined as the active apprehension of Idealism. And this definition, if rightly understood, will be found to harmonise perfectly with the theistic view. Max Müller is a typical representative of the theistic philosophy. He says ("Lectures on the Science of Religion"):

"As there is a faculty of speech, independent of all the historical forms of language; so there is in man a faculty of faith independent of all historical religions. There is a faculty or disposition which, independent of, nay, in spite of, sense and reason, enables man to apprehend God."

But this faculty of faith in God is *not direct and immediate*: it is indirect, it works only

through Idealism, and can exist only in the idealist. Faith is primarily in the great ideals which converge in God. Thus, and thus only, does faith in God become possible; by no other path can Theism be approached.

If you throw into the ground a quantity of good corn which you might eat or sell, you do so trusting in the operation of some mysterious and incomprehensible forces which will cause it to germinate. If you throw away the advantages of this life for Idealism, you put your trust in higher laws which are equally mysterious and incomprehensible. This higher trust is faith. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1); and these "things not seen" are ideals, such as honesty, justice, truthfulness, purity, fraternity. He has faith who comes to realise that these unseen things are realities, that the safety of the soul is bound up with them, and that there is no hope elsewhere. The anchor is universally regarded as the symbol of faith.

Faith has been called a sixth sense, but whereas the senses of the body are mainly automatic, faith requires a serious effort of the will. Rational faith is not the parrot-like repetition of formulæ dictated by a priest; it is not the blindfold adherence to the text of some sacred book, but something more deeply rooted in man's nature.

"There is such a thing as faith in justice, freedom, humanity, mercy, compassion, and above

all, in truth: nor do I see why such faith should not be called religious.”<sup>1</sup>

There is indeed no other faith than this, for trust in ideals is in very truth trust<sup>2</sup> in God Who is the source of these ideals. A ship made fast to a cable is held by the rock round which that cable winds; thus by faith in ideals is the soul connected with the “Rock of Ages,” with Deity, with Life.<sup>3</sup>

Matthew Arnold (“Literature and Dogma”) expresses the conviction that “it is well with the righteous.” This conviction, provided that it be active and practical, is precisely what the idealist understands by faith. Without faith all noble action is paralysed. “All that is grand, sublime, and of benefit to the race has come out of faith, not out of unbelief” (Froude). The struggle between faith and unfaith is one that ends as soon as it begins, for in times of trial we realise that a man “lives by faith” (Heb. x. 38). The contest which must ever be renewed is that between rational and irrational faith, between religion and superstition. The real difficulty is *to look within ourselves* [to follow the Inner Light], to feel that “we are not dependent for our faith upon the testimony of apostles, the traditions of past ages, the authority of doctors and churches.”<sup>2</sup>

Faith has reference to ideals which elude all proof and demonstration. Belief, on the other hand, is in facts which may be verified. Facts

<sup>1</sup> G. Forester, “Faith of an Agnostic.”

<sup>2</sup> Maurice, “Lessons of Hope.”

form the groundwork of science, ideals of Religion. The word "belief" is used in various senses. If I say that I believe wood to be composed of cells and vessels, I mean that I accept a fact which may be made evident by the help of a lens. When I talk about believing in purity, honesty, justice, fraternity, etc., I mean that I accept certain ideals which are openly professed but repudiated in practice by all governments and by the mass of mankind, which cannot be proved to be more than mere conventions, which the materialist may and does explain away and deny. When I speak of believing in God, I mean to say that I accept the theory that there is in Nature a Divine Spirit, and in man also a kindred spirit (called soul) which is not necessarily destroyed by death. In the first case, I mean by belief the recognition of a fact: this has to do with science. In the second case, I mean by belief the practical acceptance of an ideal: this is Religion. In the third case, belief is in a theory which admits of no absolute proof or disproof: this is philosophy.

The popular superstitions profess to be based on facts. But these so-called facts are palpable fictions. And even if they were facts, they could have no reference to Religion, for facts belong to the province of Science. Rational Religion rests on faith, which takes fact and science for granted. Faith cannot clash with science, for it begins where science ends.

Belief (practical faith) in ideals has a direct

effect on life and conduct. Belief in a philosophical theory has no such direct effect; but it is extremely probable that in cultivated minds a theistic philosophy will ever be associated with an idealist Religion. As a man's faith, so is his life:

"The faith of each believer . . .

Conforms itself to what he truly is:

Where thou shalt see a worshipper, that one

To what he worships lives assimilate."

—BHAGAVAD, *Gita*, cap. 17.

Morality may be taught: *didakton hē aretē*. That is to say, the nature of morality may be explained to the young. But with Religion it is otherwise. Idealism can exist only in those souls who are by nature prepared and pre-disposed: the rest are unable to practise or even to understand the higher life. Thus, for the multitude, faith in ideals is replaced by the imitation of the Great and Good: an indirect idealism which may lead on to higher things.

Faith is independent of doctrines and dogmas, of creeds and formulæ. It will linger half-choked, distorted, and deformed, in superstitious minds; it shines in the disordered dreams of the mystic; it glimmers in the delusions of spiritism and theosophism. But there exists (may it be ours!) a higher, broader faith, in harmony with Nature, akin to all things true and beautiful; that faith of Emerson's which "blends with the light of rising and of setting suns, with the flying cloud, the singing bird, the breath of flowers."

A creed is a concise statement of the principles which govern life and conduct. There are those who ostentatiously repudiate all creeds, who regard it as a mark of enlightenment to own no definite confession of faith. Better, perhaps, this vague and negative attitude of mind than the elastic conscience of those who are prepared to repeat with cheerful and indiscriminating dishonesty any given form of words, Apostolic, Nicene, or Athanasian. But if a man has principles, why should he object to state them? Men whose minds are in a state of flux, who have no settled convictions, may well hesitate to commit themselves to any definite statement. Nevertheless this incubation cannot last for ever: *il faut accoucher!* Can it be that some refuse to state their views in black and white lest the uncomfortable fact should be revealed that they have crossed the rubicon?

There are denominations in which the honest statement of a creed would cause a complete disruption, a consummation much to be desired, for it would set free the progressive spirits from the incubus of mediævalism and thus save the organism from premature decay.

The arguments against a definite confession of faith are mainly these: that creeds become obsolete as new truths are revealed to each succeeding generation; also that creeds breed discord. It is true that the creed of to-day will not be that of some future age, for creeds wear out. So do your shoes; but you do not



on that account go bare-foot! It is *not* true that creeds breed discord, though they may reveal a divergence of opinion which was hidden and therefore all the more mischievous. A rational or a theistic creed does not make a man rational or theistic; it merely states the fact that he is so, a fact which it is dishonest to conceal.

### RATIONAL CREED (EXOTERIC)

I believe that the will is free to choose the better or the worse.

I believe in Conscience, which prompts to right and justice.

I believe in Reason, which guides to truth and knowledge and enlightenment.

I believe in abstract Beauty and Harmony; in Honesty, Sincerity, and Purity.

I believe in Love and Charity, which lead to Fraternity: in Humility, Modesty, and Mercy both to man and beast.

I believe that reverence for Nature is essential to Religion, and that the body, being part of Nature, is also sacred.

I believe that it is well with those who, following the example of the Great and Good, obey these ideals both in public and in private life, although this involves suffering and loss.

This creed implies no denial of God and the future life. It is simply preliminary to Theism. But it avoids the hypocrisy and the insincerity of thrusting upon children and on immature adult intellects—that is, upon the enormous majority of mankind—abstract ideas which they are unable to comprehend.

## PRIVATE (ESOTERIC) CREED OF A THEIST

I believe that man is animated by a soul which is divine, and which can only be injured and destroyed by sin.

I believe that the soul has certain attributes or powers : firstly, the Will ; next, Reason and Conscience ; lastly, Intuition and Love which are supreme.

I believe that these faculties of the soul are connected with the divine ideals, such as Justice and Righteousness, Knowledge and Enlightenment, Truth, Beauty and Purity, and above all, Fraternity, which unites us with Humanity through Family and Race.

I believe that the pursuit of these and similar ideals in public and in private life leads through suffering to peace and happiness and joy. And I hold that the vilest vice is cruelty to man or beast, inasmuch as it offends against the highest ideal, which is Love.

I believe that the Body, being the dwelling-place of the Soul, is sacred : and that Nature also is sacred, being animated by a Spirit kindred to the Soul of Man.

I believe that there is a mysterious fellowship between all those in all ages who suffer for righteousness and follow in the footsteps of the Great and Good.

I have faith in the power of Idealism to raise the soul above sin and death, because by ideals we are united to Deity and Life ; and I have hope and confidence that it will be well hereafter with all those who have devoted themselves unselfishly to the service of Humanity.

The following lines by Professor Blackie are the product of a mind which has outgrown orthodoxy without finding, or even seeking, any definite logical standpoint.

“Creeds and confessions ? Well, I will confess  
An honest creed. Where'er I look abroad  
I see the living form and face of God,  
Which men call Nature, all whose loveliness  
I garner in my soul with pious care.  
And when I look within in thoughtful hour,

I feel a shaping presence and a power  
That makes me know the same great God is there.  
What more? That were enough, had men been true  
To their best selves ; but by base lust enticed,  
They fell, till God stretched out His hand and drew  
Them from the mire by His own son the Christ.  
Leave me to him, in his bright face to see  
God's imaged will from gloss and dogma free ! ”

Here Professor Blackie indirectly affirms the *Trinity* or triple revelation of Deity ; i. outward in Nature ; ii. inward in Reason, Conscience, Sense of Beauty, Love ; iii. the confirming and completing reflection of Deity in the Great and Good.

Ruskin is so far removed from orthodoxy by his idealism and by his humanitarian teaching that his creed and decalogue are not inappropriate to this chapter. We will not infer from his silence about a future state that he accepts the dismal doctrine of universal annihilation.

The following summary is taken from the “Creed of St George's Guild” :

1. Belief and trust in the living God : love of God, who is good, and whose laws must be kept.
2. “Trust in the nobleness of human nature, in the majesty of its faculties, the fulness of its mercy, and the joy of its love.” Love thy neighbour as thyself.
3. Duty of labour and diligence.
4. Against deceit, cruelty, and wrong to men.
5. “I will not kill or hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing, but will strive to save and comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth.”
6. “I will strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness ; not in rivalry

or contention with others, but for the help, delight, and honour of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life."

7. Obedience to lawful authority, so far as is consistent with the law of God.

If analysed this creed resolves itself into a humanitarian theism associated with Nature-worship, a philosophy in perfect harmony with the religion of Idealism.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### CATECHISM : DECALOGUE AND COMMINATION

#### CATECHISM

1. What is Religion?  
Religion is concerned with Ideals.
2. What do you mean by Ideals?  
Honesty and sincerity, truth and justice, beauty and purity, mercy and love, and such-like things.
3. Of these ideals which is the highest?  
Love, which makes possible the brotherhood of man.
4. Do ideals lead to success?  
Certainly not in this stage of existence.
5. Then why should we pursue ideals?  
Because we believe that ideals are more important than success, and that in the end they will lead to happiness and life.
6. Is there any special revelation of truth and light?  
There are two great revelations :  
  - i. Inward : of Reason and Conscience ;
  - ii. Outward : of Nature.
7. Is there any other revelation?  
The lives of Great and Good men are a third revelation.  
(This is the Trinity.)
8. Is there any specially inspired book from which truth and right may be learned?  
All good books are inspired.

9. Has any church, or priest, or minister authority to teach us what is right and true?  
Certainly not : there is no other authority than reason and conscience, which are divine.
10. How many religions are there ?  
There can be but one religion, for truth is one : but there are many religious systems.
11. Does it matter to which religious system we belong ?  
It is of vital importance, for religion rules our lives.
12. Are we bound to assert our opinions ?  
It is dishonest to conceal our faith.
13. Should we try to propagate our ideas ?  
Those who labour to spread the truth will not lose their reward.
14. What is Moralty ?  
Morality is concerned with virtues.
15. What do we mean by virtues ?  
Temperance, cleanliness, diligence, courage, patience, and such-like things.
16. Why should we be moral ?  
Because health and well-being depend upon morality.
17. Is Morality connected with Religion ?  
Morality comes first.
18. Is it possible to be moral without being religious ?  
Yes, nothing is commoner, because self-interest supports morality but clashes with all true Religion.
19. What is the penalty of being irreligious ?  
There is none in this world : on the contrary, the man who pursues ideals is at a very great disadvantage.
20. Does a man who neglects Religion suffer no loss ?  
He suffers irreparable loss : but this loss is unseen and unfelt in this life. By disobeying conscience and disregarding reason he loses the sense of truth and right, and thus destroys the higher part of his nature. Morality preserves the body : religion preserves the soul, it may be at the expense of the body.
21. What do you mean by soul ?  
The soul is the unseen part of man. As the body has shape and size which can be seen, so the soul has reason and conscience and other attributes which are

unseen. These unseen things do not decay and perish : "The things which are unseen (ideals) are eternal."

22. Does the soul perish when we die?

This is hidden from us, and if we seek for *evidence or proof* of immortality we are as men peering into the darkness or dashing against the bars of a cage. There is no certainty, but there is *hope* that as a swimmer is saved by seizing something that cannot sink, so the soul by laying hold of ideals may be raised by them above the dark waters of death and become immortal.

23. Is it easy to lay hold upon idealism?

It is an extremely difficult and painful thing; it requires unceasing vigilance and lifelong effort; it demands complete self-sacrifice and the giving up of all things that most men strive after : for "we are saved as by fire," and "many are called into life but few are chosen" for the higher and more lasting life. Among animals the struggle for existence is so severe that but one out of a hundred thousand survives. The struggle for the life of the soul is just as keen : but there is this great difference that the fight which decimates all animals and plants is an outward one against rivals and competitors, but the warfare of the soul is an inward one against sensuality, selfishness, and sin.

24. What are the chief dangers of the soul?

First, the desire of worldly things ; secondly, the fear of the penalties which the world inflicts on those who will not be conformed to its low ideals. Desire and fear of worldly things are the two greatest impediments to the higher life (Epictetus).

25. Is it sufficient to overcome the love of pleasure and the fear of pain and loss?

We must shun superstition, which is the poison of the soul, and materialism, which is death.

26. Shall we live worthily if we confine ourselves to the perfecting of our own characters?

Assuredly not. The man who isolates himself from his fellows is damned. We are a part of a certain family. This family forms part of the race (not

nation) to which we belong. Each race of men forms part of Humanity. The idealist must work, and if need be, perish, for his family, his race and mankind. He must strive against all despotisms, abuses, falsehoods, errors, and superstitions which make the higher life more difficult to his family, his race, or Humanity. Isolation is damnation. Fraternity is the highest of those ideals which lead up to God.

27. What do you mean by God?

All that we can or need know is that to uswards *God is Life*.

### DECALOGUE

1. Obey your conscience, and you will have that "peace of God which passes understanding." Remember that Conscience points to duty, and duty demands an effort of the will.

2. Love and help your neighbour (Matt. xxii. 39 ; 1 John iv. 8 ; Luke x. 29) and you will share the happiness of those who live not for themselves. This is the "Royal Law" (James ii. 8), the "Golden Rule." (The older Sanscrit version is: "Injure no one by thought, word or deed.")

Prove your philanthropy by doing things that are not easy and do not bring credit.

Devote one-tenth of your income to charity. If the tithe is too difficult, come as near to it as you can.

3. Cultivate all the powers of your mind, not merely the one faculty by which you obtain your living.

Keep your mind in contact with thoughts and with things that are true and beautiful.

Never read accounts of cruelty, sensuality, or dishonesty, lest the mind be tainted ; for all knowledge is assimilation to the object of knowledge.

4. Train and exercise your body, and avoid as far as possible stimulants, luxuries, and excesses.

*Mens sana* is best preserved *in corpore sano*.<sup>1</sup>

5. Acknowledge no other authority than Reason. But pay

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, in "Xenophon," Mem. iii. 2.

- ii. Tainted with falsehood is the soul of him who supports an institution which he knows to be corrupt. And false is he who conceals any truth that is revealed to him, or who shuts his eyes to an inconvenient truth.
- iii. Vile is the man who associates Reform and Progress with any form of sensuality. He shall turn many from the path, and shall be turned back himself from the gates of life.
- iv. Shun all those teachers who claim for themselves any special revelation or any supernatural powers. Avoid also those impostors who pretend to communicate with the spirits of the departed, and those who practise necromancy or any kind of divination or magic.
- v. Cursed is the man who persecutes his fellows in the name of Religion. And cursed also are they who torture any helpless creature in the name of Science. Cursed is he who kills and calls it "sport."
- vi. Woe to him who takes advantage of his neighbour's ignorance, weakness, or folly. His gain shall turn to loss: his prosperity shall end in perdition.
- vii. Woe to those who pollute the minds of children with superstition, or their bodies by inoculation, for they fight against God and Nature, and the evil which they work shall recoil upon themselves.
- viii. Woe to those who labour to defend a lie, who gild and beautify a falsehood, and adorn it with art and eloquence: zealous slaves of a master who will slay them.
- ix. Blind is the guide who teaches that the upward path is an easy or a pleasant one. "I offer you a bitter draught," says Epictetus the master.
- x. Lost are all they who deny God in their lives: but they who deny Him with their lips shall be forgiven.



## APPENDIX I

### FRENCH REPUBLICAN CALENDAR OF 1793

From Larousse, "Dictionnaire Universel du  
xix<sup>e</sup> Siècle," and Mason's excellent little  
French Dictionary, Published by Macmillan.

#### VENDE'MIAIRE

FIRST DECADE.		SECOND DECADE.		THIRD DECADE.	
1. Grapes	Sep. 22	11. Potato	Oct. 2	21. Hemp	Oct. 12
2. Saffron	" 23	12. Everlasting	" 3	22. Peach	" 13
3. Chestnut	" 24	13. Gourd	" 4	23. Turnip	" 14
4. Colchicum	" 25	14. Reseda	" 5	24. Amaryllis	" 15
5. <i>Horse</i>	" 26	15. <i>Ass</i>	" 6	25. <i>Ox</i>	" 16
6. Balsam	" 27	16. Mirabilis	" 7	26. Aubergine	" 17
7. Carrot	" 28	17. Pumpkin	" 8	27. Capsicum	" 18
8. Amaranth	" 29	18. Buck-wheat	" 9	28. Tomato	" 19
9. Parsnip	" 30	19. Sunflower	" 10	29. Barley	" 20
10. <i>Tub</i>	Oct. 1	20. <i>Wine-press</i>	" 11	30. <i>Barrel</i>	" 21

#### BRUMAIRE

FIRST DECADE.		SECOND DECADE.		THIRD DECADE.	
1. Apple	Oct. 22	11. Salsify	Nov. 1	21. Bacchante	Nov. 11
2. Celery	" 23	12. Water- chestnut	" 2	22. Medlar	" 12
3. Pear	" 24	13. Jerusalem Artichoke	" 3	23. Madder	" 13
4. Beet	" 25	14. Endive	" 4	24. Orange	" 14
5. <i>Goose</i>	" 26	15. <i>Turkey</i>	" 5	25. <i>Pheasant</i>	" 15
6. Heliotrope	" 27	16. Chervil	" 6	26. Pistacia	" 16
7. Fig	" 28	17. Cress	" 7	27. "Macjone"	" 17
8. Scorzonera	" 29	18. Plumbago	" 8	28. Quince	" 18
9. White beam	" 30	19. Pomegranate	" 9	29. Service tree	" 19
10. <i>Plough</i>	" 31	20. <i>Harrow</i>	" 10	30. <i>Garden roller</i>	" 20

## FRIMAIRE

FIRST DECADE.	SECOND DECADE.	THIRD DECADE.
1. Rampion Nov. 21	11. Wax Dec. 1	21. Maple Dec. 11
2. Rape „ 22	12. Horse-radish „ 2	22. Heather „ 12
3. Chicory „ 23	13. Cedar „ 3	23. Reed „ 13
4. Medlar „ 24	14. Pine „ 4	24. Sorrel Dock „ 14
5. <i>Pig</i> „ 25	15. <i>Koebuck</i> „ 5	25. <i>Cricket</i> „ 15
6. Corn salad „ 26	16. Gorse „ 6	26. Pine Kernel „ 16
7. Cauliflower „ 27	17. Cypress „ 7	27. Cork „ 17
8. Honey „ 28	18. Ivy „ 8	28. Truffle „ 18
9. Juniper „ 29	19. Savin „ 9	29. Olive „ 19
10. <i>Pick-axe</i> „ 30	20. <i>Mattock</i> „ 10	30. <i>Shovel</i> „ 20

## NIVOSE

FIRST DECADE.	SECOND DECADE.	THIRD DECADE.
1. Turf Dec. 21	11. Granite Dec. 31	21. Gypsum Jan. 10
2. Coal „ 22	12. Clay Jan. 1	22. Salt „ 11
3. Bitumen „ 23	13. Slate „ 2	23. Iron „ 12
4. Sulphur „ 24	14. Grit „ 3	24. Copper „ 13
5. <i>Dog</i> „ 25	15. <i>Rabbit</i> „ 4	25. <i>Cat</i> „ 14
6. Lava „ 26	16. Flint „ 5	26. Tin „ 15
7. Humus „ 27	17. Marl „ 6	27. Lead „ 16
8. Manure „ 28	18. Lime „ 7	28. Zinc „ 17
9. Saltpetre „ 29	19. Marble „ 8	29. Mercury „ 18
10. <i>Flail</i> „ 30	20. <i>Winnow</i> „ 9	30. <i>Sieve</i> „ 19

## PLUVIOSE

FIRST DECADE.	SECOND DECADE.	THIRD DECADE.
1. Daphne laureola Jan. 20 }	11. Hellebore Jan. 30 }	21. Thlaspi Feb. 9
2. Moss „ 21	12. Broccoli „ 31	22. Thymelea „ 10
3. Butcher's broom „ 22 }	13. Laurel Feb. 1 }	23. Cynodon „ 11
4. Snowdrop „ 23	14. Filbert „ 2	24. Fowler's net „ 12
5. <i>Bull</i> „ 24	15. <i>Cow</i> „ 3	25. <i>Hare</i> „ 13
6. Laurus-tinus „ 25	16. Box-tree „ 4	26. Wood „ 14
7. Tinder „ 26	17. Lichen „ 5	27. Hazel-nut „ 15
8. Mezereum „ 27	18. Yew „ 6	28. Cyclamen „ 16
9. Poplar „ 28	19. Pulmonaria „ 7	29. Celandine „ 17
10. <i>Axe</i> „ 29 }	20. <i>Pruning-knife</i> „ 8 }	30. <i>Sledge</i> „ 18

## VENTOSE

FIRST DECADE.		SECOND DECADE.		THIRD DECADE.	
1. Coltsfoot	Feb. 19	11. Narcissus	Mar. 1	21. Mandragora	Mar. 11
2. Cornel	" 20	12. Elm	" 2	22. Parsley	" 12
3. Wallflower	" 21	13. Fumitory	" 3	23. Cochlearia	" 13
4. Privet	" 22	14. Sisymbrium	" 4	24. Daisy	" 14
5. <i>He-goat</i>	" 23	15. <i>She-goat</i>	" 5	25. <i>Tunny</i>	" 15
6. Asarum	" 24	16. Spinach	" 6	26. Dandelion	" 16
7. Alaternus	" 25	17. Doronic	" 7	27. Sylvia	" 17
8. Violet	" 26	18. Pimpernel	" 8	28. Asplenium	" 18
9. Willow	" 27	19. Chervil	" 9	29. Ash-tree	" 19
10. <i>Spade</i>	" 28	20. <i>String</i>	" 10	30. <i>Dibble</i>	" 20

## GERMINAL

FIRST DECADE.		SECOND DECADE.		THIRD DECADE.	
1. Primrose	Mar. 21	11. Periwinkle	Mar. 31	21. Judas-tree	Apr. 10
2. Plane-tree	" 22	12. Hornbeam	Apr. 1	22. Cos lettuce	" 11
3. Asparagus	" 23	13. Morel	" 2	23. "Marconnier"	" 12
4. Tulip	" 24	14. Beech-tree	" 3	24. Eruca	" 13
5. <i>Fowl</i>	" 25	15. <i>Bee</i>	" 4	25. <i>Pigeon</i>	" 14
6. Blitum	" 26	16. Lettuce	" 5	26. Anemone	" 15
7. Birch-tree	" 27	17. Larch	" 6	27. Lilac	" 16
8. Jonquil	" 28	18. Hemlock	" 7	28. Pansy	" 17
9. Alder-tree	" 29	19. Radish	" 8	29. Bilberry	" 18
10. <i>Forcing</i> <i>Frame</i>	" 30 }	20. <i>Bee-hive</i>	" 9 }	30. <i>Fork</i>	" 19

## FLOREÁL

FIRST DECADE.		SECOND DECADE.		THIRD DECADE.	
1. Rose	Apr. 20	11. Rhubarb	Apr. 30	21. Statice	May 10
2. Oak	" 21	12. Sainfoin	May. 1	22. Fritillary	" 11
3. Fern	" 22	13. Golden-rod	" 2	23. Borage	" 12
4. Hawthorn	" 23	14. Ground Ivy	" 3	24. Valerian	" 13
5. <i>Nightingale</i>	" 24	15. <i>Silkworm</i>	" 4	25. <i>Carp</i>	" 14
6. Columbine	" 25	16. Comfrey	" 5	26. Spindle-tree	" 15
7. Lily of the Valley	" 26 }	17. Pimpernel	" 6 }	27. Chive	" 16
8. Mushroom	" 27	18. Goosefoot	" 7	28. Bugloss	" 17
9. Hyacinth	" 28	19. Orache	" 8	29. Mustard	" 18
10. <i>Rake</i>	" 29	20. <i>Hoe</i>	" 9	30. <i>Crook</i>	" 19

## PRAIRIAL

FIRST DECADE.	SECOND DECADE.	THIRD DECADE.
1. Lucerne medic May 20 }	11. Strawberry May 30 }	21. Barbel June 9
2. Day-lily „ 21	12. Betony „ 31	22. Camomile „ 10
3. Clover „ 22	13. Pea June 1	23. Honeysuckle „ 11
4. Angelica „ 23 }	14. Acacia „ 2 }	24. Yellow galium „ 12
5. <i>Duck</i> „ 24	15. <i>Quail</i> „ 3	25. <i>Tench</i> „ 13
6. Balm melittis „ 25 }	16. Pink „ 4 }	26. Jasmine „ 14
7. Tall oat „ 26	17. Elder „ 5	27. Vervain „ 15
8. Martagon „ 27	18. Poppy „ 6	28. Thyme „ 16
9. Wild thyme „ 28	19. Linden „ 7	29. Peony „ 17
10. <i>Scythe</i> „ 29	20. <i>Pitch-fork</i> „ 8	30. <i>Waggon</i> „ 18

## MESSIDOR

FIRST DECADE.	SECOND DECADE.	THIRD DECADE.
1. Rye June 19	11. Coriander June 29	21. Mint July 9
2. Oats „ 20	12. Artichoke „ 30	22. Cummin „ 10
3. Onion „ 21	13. Stock July 1	23. Bean „ 11
4. Veronica „ 22	14. Lavender „ 2	24. Orchis „ 12
5. <i>Mullet</i> „ 23	15. <i>Chamois</i> „ 3	25. <i>Guinea-fowl</i> „ 13
6. Rosemary „ 24	16. Gooseberry „ 4	26. Sage „ 14
7. Cucumber „ 25	17. Tobacco „ 5	27. Garlic „ 15
8. Challot „ 26	18. Lathyrus „ 6	28. Vetch „ 16
9. Artemisia „ 27	19. Cherry „ 7	29. Corn „ 17
10. <i>Sickle</i> „ 28	20. <i>Park</i> „ 8	30. " <i>Chalmie</i> " „ 18

## THERMIDOR

FIRST DECADE.	SECOND DECADE.	THIRD DECADE.
1. Spelt July 19	11. Parsnip July 29	21. Carline Aug. 8
2. Mullein „ 20	12. " <i>Salicot</i> " „ 30	22. Caper „ 9
3. Melon „ 21	13. Apricot „ 31	23. Lentil „ 10
4. Darnel lolium „ 22 }	14. Basil Aug. 1	24. Inula „ 11
5. <i>Ram</i> „ 23	15. <i>Sheep</i> „ 2	25. <i>Otter</i> „ 12
6. Equisetum „ 24	16. Mallow „ 3	26. Myrtle „ 13
7. Artemisia „ 25	17. Flax „ 4	27. Colza „ 14
8. Mug-wort „ 26	18. Almond „ 5	28. Lupin „ 15
9. Bramble „ 27	19. Gentian „ 6	29. Cotton „ 16
10. <i>Watering-pot</i> „ 28 }	20. <i>Canal-lock</i> „ 7	30. <i>Mill</i> „ 17

## FRUCTIDOR

FIRST DECADE.		SECOND DECADE.		THIRD DECADE.	
1. Plum	Aug. 18	11. Water-melon	Aug. 28	21. Eglantine	Sept. 7
2. Millet	„ 19	12. Fennel	„ 29	22. Nut	„ 8
3. Puff-ball	„ 20	13. Barbery	„ 30	23. Hop	„ 9
4. Barley	„ 21	14. Walnut	„ 31	24. Sorghum	„ 10
5. <i>Salmon</i>	„ 22	15. <i>Trout</i>	Sept. 1	25. <i>Cray-fish</i>	„ 11
6. Tuberose	„ 23	16. Citron	„ 2	26. Orange	„ 12
7. Barley	„ 24	17. Teazel	„ 3	27. Golden-rod	„ 13
8. Apocynum	„ 25	18. Buckthorn	„ 4	28. Maize	„ 14
9. Liquorice	„ 26	19. “ <i>Tagette</i> ”	„ 5	29. Chestnut	„ 15
10. <i>Ladder</i>	„ 27	20. <i>Panier</i>	„ 6	30. <i>Basket</i>	„ 16

## SANSULOTTIDES, OR COMPLEMENTARY DAYS

1st. Virtue	.	.	.	.	.	Sept. 17
2nd. Genius	.	.	.	.	.	„ 18
3rd. Work	.	.	.	.	.	„ 19
4th. Opinion	.	.	.	.	.	„ 20
5th. Rewards	.	.	.	.	.	„ 21

The year begins on the day nearest to the Autumnal Equinox, therefore it varied a day, or even two.

There were 12 months of 30 days each, with 5 complementary days at the end.

Every Fourth or Olympic year has a sixth complementary day, as in our leap year. It was to be called Revolution Day.

The death of Socrates took place 399 years before Christ, so that 1900 A.D. is equivalent to 2299 Anno Socratis.

# APPENDIX II

## SOLAR HEROES: See CHAPTERS 7, 8 AND 9.

	HERACLES	ACHILLEUS	ODYSSEUS	PERSEUS	THESEUS	FINN	BUDDHA	MOSES	CHRIST
1. Parthenogenesis (Virgin-birth): father a god, or a King representing a god. Long-expected and foretold	** Son of Zeus	* Son of Thetis	* Son of a King	** Son of Zeus	** Son of Neptune	*	* Son of a King	*	**
3. Exposed to danger in youth	** Snakes			** Water		**	**	** Water	**
4. Separated from Mother, Sister or Bride, re-united at last	** Iole	** Briseis	** Penelope	** Danae	** Ariadne	**	** Yasodhara	* Pharao	** Mary
5. At variance with authority, an outcast	** Eurystheus	** Agamemnon.	*	*	*	**	*	*	** Pilate
6. Works for others, and suffers	**	*	*	**	**	**	**	**	**
7. Short-lived, but loved by the gods	*	**				*	*	*	**
8. Golden hair or yellow trappings, etc.		* horse Xanthus		*	*	*	* Yellow robe	*	* Yellow hair
9. Has strength and courage: slays a monster: unerring weapon	** Hydra	**	** Cyclops	** Dragon	** Minotaur	**	*	*	* Satan
10. Is followed by a weaker comrade or echo	** Philoctetes	** Patroclus			* Pirithous	* Oisín		** Aaron	** St John
11. Attribute the number twelve	** 12 Labours		** 12 Axe-handles			** 12 Wild ducks	** 12 Disciples	** 12 Tribes	** 12 Disciples

N.B. — \*\* Complete agreement with type.  
\* Partial agreement with type.

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R. G.

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